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he Kaiser vs. Bismarck

THE KAISER *vs.* BISMARCK

Books by

PRINCE OTTO Von BISMARCK

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KAISER VS. BISMARCK
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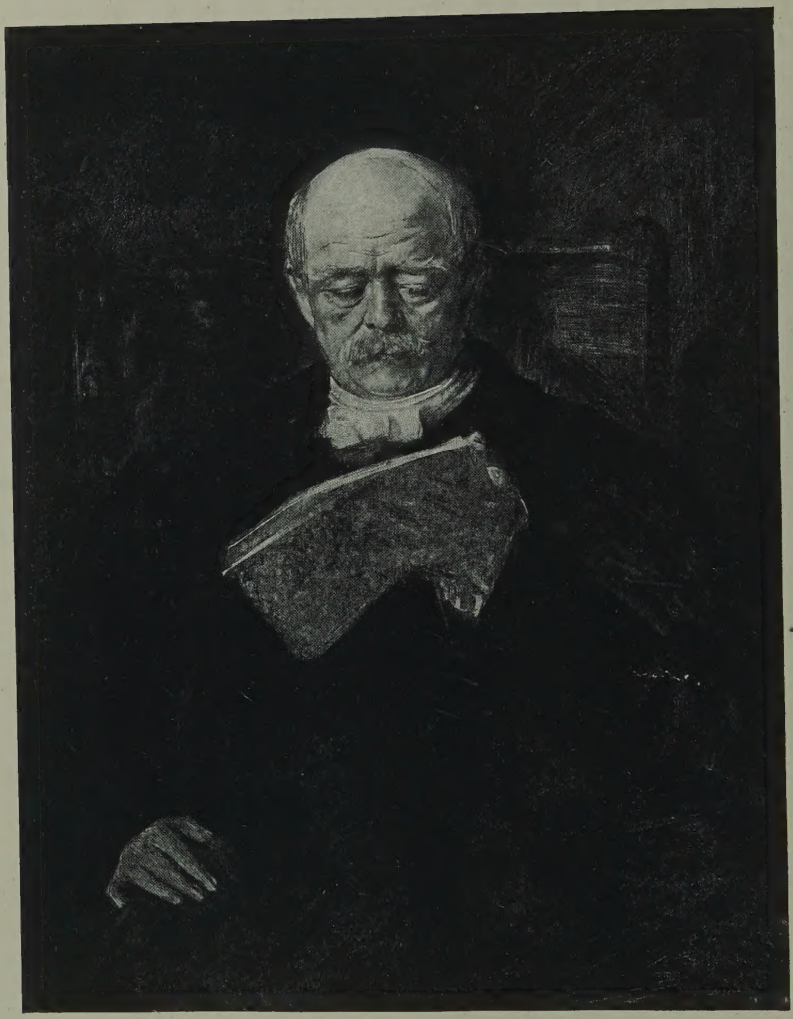

PRINCE BISMARCK. AFTER A PORTRAIT BY LENBACH

THE KAISER vs. BISMARCK

Suppressed Letters by the Kaiser and New Chapters from the Autobiography of the IRON CHANCELLOR; *With a Historical Introduction by* CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN, *Professor of History, Columbia University; Author of* "Europe since 1815"

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD MIALL

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KAISER VS. BISMARCK

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DEDICATED

TO MY SONS AND GRANDSONS

OR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST

AND AS A LESSON FOR THE FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

By CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN
Professor of History in Columbia University

THE year 1888 possesses a special and memorable significance in the history of Germany. It was the year of the Three Emperors, witnessing the passing from the scene of two figures who had long been active and familiar, who had been connected with great events and high transactions in the realm of politics and war, witnessing also the arrival upon the stage of a new figure, quite unknown, of quite incalculable import, whose probable destinies the world was in no position even vaguely and loosely to forecast, so little had his personality been revealed. William I died on March 9, 1888, at the age of ninety-one; his son and successor, Frederick III, after a reign of a hundred days of physical agony and spiritual fortitude, died on June 15th, at the age of fifty-six; and William II, twenty-nine years old, on that day ascended the most powerful throne in Europe, from which thirty years later he was to be hurled in the midst of a whirlwind of destruction which with incredible lightness of heart he had let loose upon the world. Behind the three figures and looming far above them was the man who had made them great by vastly elevating their station in the world and by endowing them with a power commensurate with their magnified opportunities. If ever there was a maker of emperors Bismarck was that man, Bis-

marck who had begun life as a narrow, provincial Junker of the strictest and straitest sect and who had contrived to become a great national and international figure, dominating his age as did no other single, personal force; dominating it partly by superior astuteness and partly by a franker brutality of method than the world had latterly experienced.

The fundamental aim of Bismarck's statecraft was the exaltation of the Prussian monarchy and of the monarchical principle. Living in a century increasingly clamorous for democratic and responsible government, he challenged and defied liberalism in every way and with every accent of contempt and with every term of opprobrium. The idea that the Prussian monarch should become inferior in actual power to his Ministers and that his Ministers should become responsible to the popularly elected parliament—in other words, that the people, not the monarch, should be in the saddle—was an idea utterly repugnant to Bismarck's thought. It had been, he said, the Prussian kings and not the Prussian people who had made Prussia great, and this, the great historic fact, must be preserved and even accentuated still more. "The Prussian Crown must not allow itself," he announced, "to be thrust into the powerless position of the English Crown, which seems more like a smartly decorative cupola on the state edifice than its central pillar of support, as I consider ours." Called to power by William I in 1862 as a last hope in the critical and desperate struggle which the King was then carrying on with parliament, Bismarck fought and won a decisive victory, defeating liberalism at every point, abasing parliament, and immensely reinforcing the monarchical authority and prestige. And when later he was able to create the German Empire as an additional trophy and distinction for the

Prussian monarch, and create it by blood and iron and not by speeches and majority votes, which he despised, he was able so to shape the new imperial institutions as to avoid all semblance of parliamentary government, of ministerial responsibility, and so to fashion the office for which he was himself destined, the Chancellorship, as to make himself dependent only upon the Emperor, and to make the other federal officials responsible only to himself.

As the Chancellor was appointed by the Emperor, was responsible to the Emperor and to him alone, and might be dismissed at any moment, the personal and official relations of Bismarck with William I, Frederick III, and William II became necessarily matters of great and far-reaching public concern. As long as Bismarck held office the public life of Germany and of Europe would inevitably receive the impress of his thought and purpose, and whether he should remain in power was determined by three men in succession, and by no more. Politics is reduced to great simplicity when expressed in terms of royal favor or disfavor. History, therefore, occupies itself, not with trifles, but with matters of primary importance, when it inquires how things stand between the monarch and the Minister; for from this relationship flow streams of tendency of incalculable consequence.

Between William I and Bismarck conflicts often arose, vital, tense, and most painful to both. William disapproved the form and frequently the very substance of many of Bismarck's measures, but he always yielded, in the end, before a mind and a will which he recognized as stronger than his own and more far-sighted, and he had no occasion to regret his action, since the prosperity of his country and the fortunes of his house steadily increased. William came in time to

repose unlimited confidence in his gifted Minister whose obvious superiority had sometimes frightened and embarrassed him. William was grateful for services rendered, and in the case of Bismarck he recognized the unique and supreme nature of those services. Bismarck had access to his sovereign at all times and in all places, and he generally kept him informed as to all or nearly all the details of current politics. The intimacy of these two men was close and in the latter years almost unruffled, and when the Iron Chancellor had occasion finally to announce to the Reichstag the death of his sovereign and master he broke down, after a few words, and wept. William I, a man of ordinary intelligence, had this rare merit, that he judged himself accurately. He knew that he was incapable of governing without strong and trusted advisers. He himself chose Roon and Moltke and Bismarck, and, having chosen them, he stood by them through thick and thin, subordinating his views or preferences, when necessary, to theirs. He was not jealous of the power they wielded or of their popularity—power and popularity based, as he well knew, upon achievements for the Fatherland and for the House of Hohenzollern.

Between Bismarck and Frederick III there was no such harmony, and, had Frederick lived, the incompatibility of temper which had long existed might have led to a serious strain. The new Emperor was a liberal and independent mind, a man who believed in free institutions, and who hoped for the introduction of a parliamentary system of government into Germany Frederick admired the English constitution as much as Bismarck detested it. But Frederick, when he came to the throne, was a dying man, ill of cancer of the throat. Unable to speak, he could only indicate his wishes by writing or by signs, and when opposition

developed he was too weak to sustain a contest, and so usually yielded. And opposition did develop from the start, active, systematic, and discreditable. Frederick had long desired to show the world that a Hohenzollern, who believed in Prussia and in the Prussian army, could also be a constitutional and a liberal monarch. Had his aspiration, cherished since his early days, been realized, it is needless to say the history of contemporary Europe would have taken a very different turn. But not only was he stricken with a mortal disease, but he was made to know during his brief possession of nominal power the full bitterness that may reside in death, the arrogance, the insolence, the ingratitude, the unscrupulous intriguing of those of whom at least decency might have been expected, in a situation in which the baser passions are often stilled. This is an odious chapter in Prussian history and in the biographies of Bismarck and William II.

The accession of the Emperor William II, on June 15, 1888, brought relief to Bismarck and seemed to assure the indefinite continuance of his power. The new monarch, twenty-nine years of age, was of an active mind, of a fertile imagination, self-confident, ambitious. He showed in his earliest acts that under him there would be no dallying with liberalism. In proclamations to the army and to the people he manifested his enthusiasm for the old and established Prussian institutions and Prussian life, and his desire and intention to continue his grandfather's policy. It was inferred that he would have nothing to do with the spirit and policies of the "Hundred Days." It was known, too, that the new Emperor had revered his grandfather and that he had had serious conflicts with his father and his mother. Bismarck breathed freely and settled back with the comfortable conviction that

he was regarded, in the highest of all quarters, as indispensable. Had not the Crown Prince as recently as April 1st proposed a resounding toast to him on the occasion of his birthday: "Standard-bearer of the imperial banner, may you long continue to hold it aloft!" And now Bismarck composed the Kaiser's first speech from the throne, and the Kaiser, having read it, extended his hand from the throne itself to Bismarck, and the resulting vigorous clasp seemed a sign to all the world that the monarch and the Minister were in complete accord. The young sovereign was full of good will, Bismarck confided to his friends. Nothing could be more idyllic.

Twenty-one months later, to the amazement of the world and to the satisfaction of numerous enemies, Bismarck was dismissed from the position he had held for twenty-eight years, which he had rendered memorable, as well as most profitable to the House of Hohenzollern. His dismissal was a famous incident in the history of the nineteenth century, and for the two persons most intimately concerned it meant much—the end of one career and the beginning of another.

Bismarck withdrew to his estate, Friedrichsruh, where he lived for eight years longer, surrounded by his family and friends. He found country life less attractive than he had thought it from previous experience, and retirement from the world's great stage soon became an intolerable bore. To be compelled, like any other human being, to read in the morning paper the news which he had been in the habit of creating, was humiliating indeed, and also unsatisfactory, as newspapers do not always tell the truth and very frequently fail to reveal what one would like to know. But the old warrior, now discarded, was himself compelled to resort to the press as the sole means

f indulging his still vigorous combative instincts, and Hamburg journal became the organ of his discontent, hrough whose columns he leveled many poisoned iissiles at his enemies and successors. But even these olemics of the quill could not bring content. They onstituted by a kind of guerrilla warfare and Bismarck ad long been accustomed to the joys of Armageddon. riedrichsruh, it is true, became during these years a lace of pilgrimage for patriotic Germans. Delegaions, associations, distinguished individuals, visited in lmost endless succession the great exile, and formidable nd heady was the volume of incense that arose. But ll this, though gratifying, was tame for one who had asted abundantly of the real pleasures and pomp of ower. Adulation in adversity contrasts unpleasantly vith adulation in prosperity, and Bismarck was too lear-headed to make any mistake about that.

However, he accomplished, during these years of nforced rustication, one very useful and durable piece f work. He wrote or dictated his memoirs, beginning oon after his dismissal from office and working interittently upon them for years, revising and altering nd perfecting the narrative. Shortly after his death 1898, two volumes of them were published. Bisharck had said that he himself distrusted memoirs as orks of rehabilitation or personal apology. His comient was just and, moreover, was applicable to himself, et the student of history would not do without them, e, the student, being prepared to make the necessary llowances and deductions, to apply the necessary itical tests. Bismarck did not attempt, nor was he ualified, to write an impartial history of his times. e wished to justify himself, or rather to justify his olicies, at every point, wherever they had been attacked discussed. His method was not to try to cover his

career in a systematic and balanced way; whole phases of his activity, and some of the most important, were entirely ignored, as, for instance, the diplomacy which led up to the three great wars which he contrived to bring about. But, while desultory and fragmentary, nevertheless the volumes which appeared twenty years ago were prodigiously interesting. In the first place they were genuinely autobiographical in that they reflected very clearly the extraordinary personality of the author. They also revealed the personalities of those with whom he had been associated, for Bismarck displayed in them his remarkable power of delineating character, and, amid much acute criticism of Prussian policy and much close discussion of famous political struggles, he inserted a famous gallery of portraits of some of the world's celebrities, of royalties and their consorts and their Ministers and attachés. Done with particular care and mastery was the portrait of William I. And Bismarck wrote throughout in a tone and manner worthy of himself, his position, his career.

One portrait was missing in those volumes, that of the man who had dared terminate the public career of the Iron Chancellor, thus rendering possible the writing of memoirs. The second volume closed with a study of Frederick III, and William II did not appear in the narrative. He now appears, however, and is the chief figure in volume three. For Bismarck had drawn William the Second's portrait, too, and had drawn it with great care and attention to detail. He was determined that his dismissal from office should be thoroughly understood by posterity, and as it had been William who had dismissed him, William's character and actions and policies must be studied and analyzed and set forth so that men might forever see clearly how and why one mighty chapter in history had

een brought to a close, and how another chapter had egun.

It is this story that forms the content of the volume ow finally given to the public, after the world has witessed a personal catastrophe in comparison with which ne fall of Bismarck was almost a caress of fortune. t is likely that this third volume of Bismarck's reminisences will prove of greater historical importance than ne two earlier ones, as it will surely be more widely ead. Of all Bismarck's writings, it is probably the ost carefully constructed and elaborated. Moreover, adds more fresh material than did the earlier volumes r the use of the historian. Contemporary documents f great importance are here presented, and the studied haracterization, the weighty judgments, the penerating *exposé* of conduct make this a book of comanding significance. Devoted almost entirely to ne events that led up to the famous dismissal, to the ivergencies of opinion of the Minister and his master, the wirepulling and intriguing of the lesser figures, is an *ex parte* account, of course, and its actual value ill only be known after historians have subjected it their criticisms and after other archives, public nd private, have yielded up their relevant treasures. Meanwhile it will remain the most extensive, the ost detailed, and the most authoritative account we ave of an important and dramatic turning point in odern history. If its publication should prompt the aiser or his friends to add a similar installment to our formation, it would be gratefully received.

But, pending new installments from other sources, ismarck's volume will serve for enlightenment and aried entertainment. At the outset we have a striking d frank appraisal of the future Emperor by his ther, Frederick III. Writing to Bismarck in October,

1886, Frederick says, "But considering the unripeness and inexperience of my eldest son, together with his leaning toward vanity and presumption and his overweening estimation of himself, I must frankly express my opinion that it is *dangerous* to bring him into touch with foreign affairs." Interesting, too, and ironic, in view of what was before long to happen, is the letter of William to Bismarck, dated December 21, 1887, in which the Prince said, "The great and affectionate respect and heartfelt attachment which I cherish for Your Highness—and for you I would let my limbs be hewn off piecemeal, one after the other, rather than undertake anything that would be disagreeable to you or cause you difficulties—should, I think, be sufficient guaranty that I have engaged in this work in no party spirit." And the last paragraph in the same letter also arrests attention: "While concluding my letter herewith, I wish Your Highness a Happy New Year, and may it be granted to you to lead the nation onward in your accustomed wise care, whether in peace or in war. Should the latter come to pass, I hope you will not forget that here are ready the hand and the sword of a man who is fully conscious that Frederick the Great was his ancestor, and fought alone against three times as many as we have against us now."

And is not the future Emperor sufficiently adumbrated in that other letter written about the same time, November 29, 1887, in which he unfolded to the Iron Chancellor his plan of action toward his fellow sovereigns of Germany when he should be called to power by two deaths which he saw were imminent and which he was awaiting with apparent fortitude? "Elderly uncles must not put a spoke in the wheels of their dear young nephew." "It will be easy for me, as the nephew of these gentlemen, to win them over by little

acts of complaisance, and to make them tractable by means of eventual visits of ceremony. If I have first of all convinced them as to my type and character and have got them well in hand, they will then obey me all the more readily. For I must be obeyed! But obedience is better obtained by persuasion and confidence than by compulsion."

Bismarck's respectful and discreetly cooling reply to his animated correspondent may have been the insignificant beginning of that event of great pith and moment, the forced resignation of March 20, 1890. But if so, it was not apparent to either of the two persons directly involved. When, in October, 1889, in the midst of an important interview with Alexander III of Russia, the Tsar interrupted Bismarck by saying, "Yes, I believe you, I have confidence in you, but are you sure of remaining in office?" Bismarck replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty, I am absolutely sure to remain a Minister all my life." An error of calculation of eight years, pardonable, no doubt, since whims of masters are not always stable or always easy to forecast.

Between them, these two autocrats, William and Bismarck, cut a large figure in the history of the world, precipitating, among other things, four memorable wars, and building and destroying much by their adherence to the congenial policy of blood and iron. Anything that throws light upon their relations to each other is, therefore, destined to be appreciated by all who seek to understand the present age. Without wishing to moralize unduly, one may distill, from a contemplation of these two careers, the reflection, by no means new, but always timely, that the possession of power is apt to poison its possessor.

The following remark of Bismarck, which is to be found in his chapter on Caprivi, has a pertinence which

he scarcely could have foreseen: "I have heard that the Kaiser had allayed the misgivings which Caprivi had expressed as to becoming my successor with the words, 'There's no need for you to be anxious; one man's much like another, and I'll accept the responsibility for all transactions.'" "Let us hope," Bismarck adds, "that the next generation will gather the fruits of this kingly self-confidence."

THE KAISER *vs.* BISMARCK

THE KAISER *vs.* BISMARCK

NEW CHAPTERS OF BISMARCK'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I

PRINCE WILHELM

During the reign of the old Kaiser[1] I had for a long time endeavored to contrive that his grandson[2] should receive an adequate preparation for his lofty position. Before all things I held it necessary to withdraw the heir to the throne from the limited circle of the military society of Potsdam, and to bring him into contact with other than the military tendencies of the period. I had no expectation of getting him appointed to a civilian position, first of all perhaps in the Landrath, then in some government department, under the supervision of an experienced official. I confined myself to trying to get the Prince transferred to the Berlin garrison, where I could bring him into touch with wider social circles and with the different

[1] Wilhelm I, King of Prussia and German Emperor, born March 22, 1797; died March 9, 1888.

[2] Wilhelm II, born January 27, 1859; Crown Prince March 9, 1888; King and Emperor June 15, 1888; abdicated November, 1918.

central authorities. The obstacles in the way of this course appeared to consist principally of the objection of the Household Administration to the expenses of residence in Berlin—that is, to the cost of preparing the Schloss Bellevue. Potsdam remained the Prince's place of residence. There he was to receive lectures from Governor von Achenbach.[1] At his own desire, in 1886 I also obtained His Majesty's authority for giving him access to the minutes and transactions of the Foreign Office; not, I confess, without the emphatic disapproval of the Crown Prince,[2] who wrote to me on the 28th of September from Portofino on the Genoese Riviera:

My son, Prince Wilhelm, before I had knowledge of it, expressed the wish to His Majesty that he might become more closely acquainted, during the coming winter, with the activities of our governmental departments, and in consequence, I understand, he is already contemplating temporary employment in the Foreign Office.

As I have hitherto received no official communication from any quarter concerning this matter, I find myself obliged, in the first place, to apply to you in confidence, only to learn what is perhaps already decided, and also to declare that, although I am fundamentally in agreement with the policy of initiating my eldest son in the problems of the higher administration, I am decidedly against his beginning with the Foreign Office.

For considering the importance of the task to which the Prince will be set, I regard it as a matter of course that he should before all things be acquainted with the internal

[1] A Prussian jurist (1829–99), governor (*Oberpräsident*) of the province of Brandenburg, June, 1879.

[2] Friedrich III (Friedrich Wilhelm), born October 18, 1831; Crown Prince; King and Emperor March 9, 1888; died June 15, 1888.

conditions of his own country and feel that he knows them intimately before he, with his already quick and overhasty judgment, occupies himself, to a certain extent only, with politics. His actual knowledge is still defective; he has had no time to lay a proper foundation; for which reason it is absolutely necessary that his attainments should be improved and completed. This object would be accomplished by the appointment of a civilian tutor and, at the same time or later, employment in one of the ministerial departments.

But considering the unripeness and inexperience of my eldest son, together with his leaning toward vanity and presumption, and his overweening estimation of himself, I must frankly express my opinion that it is *dangerous* as yet to bring him into touch with foreign affairs.

While I beg you to treat this communication of mine as addressed to you alone, I count upon your support in this matter, which deeply concerns me.

I deplored the evident want of harmony between father and son which was manifested by this letter and the lack of that natural communicativeness on which I had counted, although the same lack of confidence had existed for years between His Majesty and the Crown Prince. I was unable, however, at that time to concur in the opinion of the latter, because the Prince was already twenty-seven years of age, and Frederick the Great ascended the throne when he was twenty-eight years old, while Friedrich Wilhelm I and III were even younger. In my reply I confined myself to saying that the Kaiser had ordered and "commanded" the Prince to enter the Foreign Office, and to calling attention to the fact that in the royal family the authority of the father was sunk in that of the monarch.

Against the Prince's removal to Berlin the Kaiser did not in the first place urge the question of expense, but the circumstance that the Prince was still too young for his promotion to the next military rank, which would have represented the external motive for the removal; and it did not help me at all to remind the Kaiser of his own much more rapid rise in the military hierarchy. The relations of the young Prince to our central authorities were confined to the Foreign Office (subordinate to myself), with whose interesting records he made himself acquainted with alacrity, but without any inclination toward persevering work. In order to instruct him more exhaustively as to the Home Department, and to introduce into his daily intercourse a civilian element, in addition to the society of his comrades, I begged the Kaiser to allow a higher official of scientific attainments to be appointed to attend upon His Royal Highness; I proposed the Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of the Interior, Herrfurth,[1] who seemed to me, owing to his intimate knowledge of the legislation and statistics of the whole country, to be peculiarly fitted to become a mentor to the heir to the throne. At my suggestion, my son invited the Prince and Herrfurth to dinner in 1888, in order to make them personally acquainted. This, however, led to no closer relation. The

[1] Ludwig Herrfurth (1830–1900), a Prussian jurist; in 1873 reporting Councilor in the Ministry of the Interior; 1881, Ministerial Director; 1882, Under-Secretary of State and Chairman of the Imperial Commission which dealt with the question of the Socialist laws; from July 2, 1888, to August 9, 1892, Minister of the Interior.

Prince said that he himself, in his youth, had acted the part of a mountain goblin in just such an uncombed beard, and, in answer to my questions, mentioned Von Brandestein of Magdeburg, a Regierungsrath[1] and an officer in the Reserve, as having a personality which was agreeable to him. He seemed, indeed, according to all information, a fit person for the post in question, and at my request he accepted it, but as early as the middle of March he expressed a wish to be relieved of it and to return to his provincial activities. He was very graciously treated by the Prince, and invited to all meals as a welcome guest, but he could not feel conscious that he was fulfilling any useful function, not could he get used to an idle court life. He was persuaded to remain a little while longer, and in June, after the Prince had ascended the throne, was appointed at the royal command to a higher post in Potsdam, in the face of the opposition of the interested authorities, which was based upon the theory of seniority.

My efforts to get the Prince removed to one of the provincial garrisons, merely in order to withdraw him from the influence of the Potsdam regiment, were unsuccessful. The cost of the princely household in the provinces seemed to the Household Administration even greater than in Berlin. Moreover, the Crown Princess was averse to the plan. The Prince was, indeed, appointed brigadier in Berlin in January, 1888, but the rapidity with which his father's malady developed finally

[1] Councilor in the administration of a departmental government. (*Trans.*)

disposed of the possibility of giving the Prince, before his accession to the throne, any other impressions of the internal life of the state than those afforded by regimental life.

An heir to the throne, as a comrade among youthful officers, the most gifted of whom, perhaps, have an eye to their future in the service, can very seldom expect to be assisted in his preparation for his future calling by the influence of his surroundings. I deeply deplored the restricted nature of the life to which the present Kaiser was condemned by the niggardliness of the Household Administration and which I had been unable to alter. He came to the throne with views which to our Prussian ideas were unfamiliar, and had not been schooled in our constitutional life.

Since the year 1884 the Prince had maintained a sometimes lively exchange of letters with me. In these a note of ill humor on his part was first perceptible after I had warned him with urgent arguments, but in a perfectly respectful manner, against two proposals, one of which was connected with the name of Stöcker.[1]

On November 28, 1887, a meeting was held at the house of the Quartermaster General, Count Waldersee,[2] at which were present the Prince and

---

[1] Stöcker, Adolf (1835–1909), Protestant theologian and politician. Founder of the Christian Social Party (1878); member of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies from 1879 and of the German Reichstag from 1881; Court and Cathedral Chaplain in Berlin 1874–90.

[2] Alfred Count von Waldersee (1832–1904); 1882, General Quartermaster and Adjutant General to the Kaiser; under Friedrich III General of Cavalry; under Wilhelm II Chief of General Staff, Member of the House of Peers, and of the Staatsrath; 1891, general commanding 9th Army Corps.

Princess Wilhelm,[1] Court Chaplain Stöcker, deputies, and other well-known persons, in order to discuss the matter of obtaining funds for the Berlin City Mission. Count Waldersee opened the proceedings with a speech in which he emphasized the fact that the City Mission flew no political colors, but that its only intention was to be loyal to the King and to foster the spirit of patriotism; that the only effective means which it could use against the anarchical tendencies of the time was the spiritual nourishment which went hand in hand with material assistance. Prince Wilhelm expressed his approval of Count Waldersee's plans, and according to the report of the *Kreuzzeitung* made use of the expression, "Christian Socialist ideas."

Coming away from this meeting, the Prince called upon my son[2] and spoke of the incident of the meeting, saying, "Stöcker, I'm inclined to think, has something of Luther in him." My son, who first heard of this meeting from the Prince, replied that Stöcker might have his merits and be a good preacher, but he was a vehement person, and his memory was not always to be relied upon. The Prince rejoined that Stöcker had, nevertheless, won many thousands of votes for the Kaiser, which he had wrested from Social Democracy. My son replied that since the elections of 1878 the Social Democratic vote had steadily

[1] Auguste Victoria, *née* Princess of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, born October 22, 1858; married February 27, 1881; Crown Princess March 9, 1888; Queen and Empress June 15, 1888.

[2] Count Herbert Bismarck, born 1849; eldest son of the Chancellor; Prince von Bismarck 1898. From 1873 in the Foreign Office; Secretary of State for the same in 1886; Prussian State Minister 1888; died 1904.

increased; if Stöcker had really won any votes there should be a demonstrable diminution. In Berlin the interest in the elections was very slight, yet the native of Berlin loves meetings, noise, and horseplay, and many indifferent persons who otherwise would never have troubled to vote had made their appearance, owing to Stöcker's agitation, and had voted for the candidate proposed by him. But it was a delusion that Stöcker and his efforts as agitator had converted any large number of Social Democrats.

After a hunt dinner, which took place soon after this in Letzlingen, the Prince handed round a newspaper containing an article dealing with the tendencies of the meeting. During the conversation which sprang up among his companions in respect of this article my son expressed the opinion that Stöcker was to be regarded not as a preacher, but as a politician, and that as such he was so acrid that one could not recommend Prince Wilhelm to allow himself to be identified with him.

My son traveled direct from Letzlingen through Berlin to Friedrichsruh, where I, in the mean time, had seen several articles on the so-called Waldersee meeting, and now asked him to tell me the meaning of them. He told me what had taken place at Letzlingen. I approved of his attitude, and remarked that for once the matter did not concern me. In the meantime the clamor in the press increased; well-disposed people called on my son and complained bitterly in the interests of the Prince that he had meddled with an

affair from which he would now be unable to extricate himself. Those who were about the Prince and had discussed the matter with him were confounded by his vehemence, and related that my son had been calumniated by him; Chamberlain von Mirbach[1] had assured the Prince and Princess that my son had written the violent article which appeared in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in December, which had first been taken as a challenge and as the signal for the Liberal press to turn against the Prince and his "Stöckerei." As a matter of fact this article originated with Rottenburg,[2] head of the Imperial Chancellery; my son had never read it, nor had I.

My son noted the effect of this baiting of the Prince at the next and all subsequent court banquets, where the Princess Wilhelm, who had hitherto been well disposed toward him, ignored him so persistently that her next recognition of him did not take place until he was on the eve of departing for St. Petersburg, when the Cabinet was received in a body.

I had not found occasion to intervene in the matter until the Prince wrote me the following letter:

POTSDAM,
December 21, 1887.

I have found to my regret that Your Highness is not in sympathy with a task which I have undertaken in the interest of the poorer classes of our people. I have found that

[1] Ernst Freiherr von Mirbach, born 1844; Chamberlain; from June, 1888, Lord High Steward (*Oberhofmeister*) to the Empress.

[2] F. J. von Rottenburg (1845–1907); Prussian jurist; 1876, in the Foreign Office; 1881, called to the Imperial Chancellery; chief of the same until February, 1891; then Under-Secretary of State, etc.

the news of this step which has been published by the Social Democratic newspapers, and unhappily reproduced by many other journals, may have afforded an occasion for misrepresenting my intentions. By reason of the intimate relations which have so long existed between Your Highness and myself, I have daily hoped that Your Highness would make inquiry of me direct. For this reason I have hitherto been silent—but now I regard it as my duty, in order to avoid further misunderstanding or misconception, to inform Your Highness plainly of the actual state of affairs. In former years many persons of high position, both in and out of Berlin, have repeatedly expressed a wish that greater festivities should from time to time be arranged in the interest of the Berlin poor, as the proceeds would be of lasting assistance to the Berlin City Mission. With the approval of His Majesty the Kaiser, preparations were made for a cavalry *fête* under my patronage. The *fête* was not given on that occasion. The idea was taken up anew this autumn, but on account of the serious illness of my father it again fell through, and in its place my wife offered to undertake the patronage of a large bazaar, as she had already done two years previously. As in the meantime the Princess, my wife, was too greatly disturbed by the increasingly disquieting news of the Crown Prince, she wished that the bazaar, too, might be postponed, as well as the other projected festivities, and that a direct appeal for a great collection might be addressed to all friends of the City Mission and of those suffering from want.

With this object a larger committee was to be appointed. To co-operate in its appointment I had friends invited from all the provinces, and it is true that they were intentionally drawn from the most diverse political parties and religious sects. On this committee the following persons, at my proposal, took the lead: Count Stolberg,[1] Minister von

[1] Otto Count Stolberg-Wernigerode, born 1837; in 1890 Prince; Prussian statesman; 1878–81, vice-president of the Cabinet and Chancellor-substitute; 1885–88, representative Minister of the Royal House; 1884–92, Lord High Chamberlain.

Puttkamer,[1] Minister von Gossler,[2] Count Waldersee, and Count Hochberg,[3] with their wives.

On November 28th my wife and I invited about thirty persons to a preliminary review of the affair by Count Waldersee. I there urged my views upon these gentlemen and laid stress upon the fact that it was to me a matter of the greatest interest to unite, in this work of Christian love, people of the most diverse political parties, in order thereby to keep the work free of all political ideas, and in this way to incite the greatest possible number of good elements to take part in this common work of Christianity. That it was incumbent upon me, of all people, in my difficult, responsible, and thorny position, to avoid giving such a cause any political coloring is, as I think you will agree, self-evident. But, on the other hand, I am fully persuaded that a combination of these elements, for the purpose explained, is an end to be desired, which offers the most effective means for a lasting campaign against Social Democracy and anarchy. The city missions already existing in various great cities of the Empire seemed to me to be the instruments best adapted for this work.

I was, therefore, delighted that at this meeting of the most diverse parties—particularly of the Liberal persuasion, Von Benda,[4] etc.—the proposal was made to extend the proposed work to all the great cities of the monarchy simultaneously. Thus the Berlin City Mission would have been only an equally privileged link in a chain of many other co-existing city missions, and would not hold a more privileged position than Magdeburg or Stettin.

This I hope will make an end of the suspicion which was

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[1] Robert von Puttkamer (1828–1900); Prussian statesman; 1879, Minister of Public Worship; 1881, Minister of the Interior; until June 8, 1888, vice-president of the Cabinet.

[2] Gustav von Gossler (1838–1902); Prussian jurist; 1881–91, Minister of Public Worship.

[3] Bolko Count von Hochberg, born 1843; jurist and musician; 1886–1902, General Intendant of the Royal Theaters in Berlin.

[4] Robert von Benda (1816–99), a Liberal politician; from 1878 to 1893 vice-president of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies.

skillfully aroused by the international misrepresentations of the press, as though a special invention of Stöcker's had been in question. It comes to this, that the intention is to place the united city missions under the supervision and leadership of a prominent ecclesiastic—who would at the same time be a member of the Working Committee, on which the beforementioned Ministers will sit—but who would in any case *not* be Stöcker. Thus the Berlin City Mission would be in the same position as all the rest in respect of the dreaded Stöcker, and he would take no further part in the business transacted by the committee than the head of the City Mission of Leipzig or Hamburg or Stettin. The Berlin City Mission is an institution operating by means of the granting, by the last General Synod, of a regular collection in the Established Church, and also by virtue of a unanimous vote in which even the Liberals took part. The most prominent and distinguished persons of all the provinces have for years been supporters of the City Mission Aid Societies, through whose support and interest I hope for the greatest assistance in the moral elevation of the masses, thanks to the co-operation of so many precious faculties.

I have been shocked to discover that some have sought, by means of a fictitious but extremely crafty and cleverly calculated insistence upon the person of Stöcker, to frustrate and cast suspicion on the cause. In spite of all the remarkable work which this man has done for the monarchy and Christendom, we have thrust him aside, as regards the association which I have proposed, simply on account of public opinion, and this step, which I had already permitted myself to carry into effect, is necessitated in a still greater degree by the extension of the work over the whole monarchy, and great stress has already been laid upon it at the meeting itself by Count Waldersee. For since the common task is colorless and nonpolitical it is open to all parties to co-operate in it, and it is even intended to appoint as the head of the Mission's work in the country an absolutely nonpolitical personality, to whom the separate city missions will be subordinate.

To this end the Minister of Public Worship and Instruction will be asked to advise us whether he can propose a suitable person.

Men like Counts Stolberg and Waldersee, General Count Kanitz, Count Hochberg, Count Ziethen-Schwerin, Von Benda, Miquel,[1] and Your Highness's truly devoted colleagues Von Puttkamer and Von Gossler are already guaranties, I should think, that the business will be conducted righteously and in accordance with instructions, and in such a way as to promote the welfare of the country, and will result in the constant and enduring furtherance of Your Highness's difficult and magnificent work in the Home Department. Be sure that I personally am inspired only by the desire which His Majesty has so often expressed, that the wandering masses of the people may be won back for the Fatherland by the joint labor of all the good elements of every class and party in the sphere of Christian activity, a plan which has also been most circumstantially advocated by Your Highness. The announcement of the plan was at first received with great applause, until the Social Democratic and freethinking newspapers assailed it, and scattered broadcast the most incredible and often the most shameless accusations. They have, at all events, done what they wanted, and have disconcerted and startled a number of people. I most certainly hope, however, that as in many places my truly nonpolitical intentions have already been conspicuously acknowledged, the good cause will be furthered and will bring blessings with it, and that the vile attacks upon it will lead to explanations and a clearing of the air.

The great and affectionate respect and the heartfelt attachment which I cherish for Your Highness—and for you I would let my limbs be hewn off piecemeal, one after the other, rather than undertake anything which would be disagreeable to you or cause you difficulties—should, I think, be sufficient

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[1] Johannes Miquel (1828–1901), National Liberal politician; Chief Burgomaster of Osnabrück; in 1880, of Frankfurt; from June, 1890, to May, 1901, Prussian Minister of Finance.

guaranty that I have engaged in this work in no party spirit. Similarly, the great confidence and warm friendship which Your Highness has always shown me, and which I have always repaid most gladly and thankfully, with a proud heart, allows me to hope that Your Highness will, after this explanation, vouchsafe me your good will in this matter, inasmuch as I have begun this work with the purest intentions and the most gratifying confidence, in co-operation with many true and noble men, and that you will not deny me your support, which will disperse all insinuations in the most effectual manner.

Briefly to recapitulate: A working committee will shortly be constituted with the co-operation of the Ministers, which will lay down the general outlines of the work, and in particular will arrange for its extension throughout the whole country. The provinces and provincial capitals will send plenipotentiaries who will represent the provinces and direct the work therein. The work of the Mission will be intrusted to a qualified person, a member of the committee (perhaps a general superintendent?), who will have the joint missions under his control. The committee will inform me from time to time what is determined upon. I am not even closely connected with the work as patron, but only remotely as a well-wisher and promoter.

While concluding my letter herewith, I wish Your Highness a happy New Year, and may it be granted to you to lead the nation onward in your accustomed wise care, whether in peace or in war. Should the latter come to pass, I hope you will not forget that here are ready the hand and the sword of a man who is fully conscious that Frederick the Great[1] was his ancestor, and fought alone against three times as many as we have against us now; and who has not in vain worked hard at his ten years of military training!

For the rest, *alleweg guet Zollre!*

In sincerest friendship

WILHELM PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

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[1] Born January 24, 1712; King of Prussia May 31, 1740; died August 17, 1780.

A few weeks earlier he had informed me of another purpose in the following letter:

POTSDAM, *November 29, 1887.*
THE MARBLE PALACE.

I take the liberty of sending Your Highness herewith a document which I have written with a view to the not impossible eventuality of the early or unexpected decease of the Kaiser and my father. It is a brief proclamation to my future colleagues, the princes of the German Empire. The standpoint from which I have written it is briefly the following:

The imperial dignity is still new, and the change in it is the first to occur. By this change the power passes from a powerful Prince, who played a prominent part in the history of the creation and foundation of the Empire, to a young and comparatively unknown ruler. The princes are almost all of my father's generation, and humanly speaking they cannot be blamed if they find it unpleasant to come under so youthful a new sovereign. For this reason the succession to the throne by inheritance (by God's grace) must be presented to the princes emphatically as a self-evident *fait accompli;* indeed, it must be done so that they have no time to brood much over the matter. For this reason it is my purpose and my desire that after perusal by Your Highness, and subsequent revision, this proclamation shall be deposited, sealed, in every Legation, and in the event of my accession to the throne it will immediately be handed to the princes concerned by the diplomatic representatives. My relations with all my cousins in the Empire are excellent; I have, at one time or another, discussed the future with almost all of them; and through my relationship with the greater number of these sovereigns I have sought to create a very agreeable basis of friendly intercourse. Your Highness will note this in the passage where I speak of support by word and deed, which means that elderly uncles must not put a spoke in the wheels of their dear young nephew! I have often exchanged ideas with my father concerning

the position of a future Kaiser, and I very soon perceived that we hold very different views. He was always of opinion that it was for him alone to command, and for the princes to obey, while I advocated the view that one must not regard the princes as a troop of vassals, but rather as a sort of colleagues, to whose remarks and wishes one would quietly give ear; whether one would fulfill them is rather a different matter. It will be easy for me, as the nephew of these gentlemen, to win them over by little acts of complaisance, and to make them tractable by means of eventual visits of ceremony. If I have first of all convinced them as to my type and character and have got them well in hand they will then obey me all the more readily. For I must be obeyed! But obedience is better obtained by persuasion and confidence than by compulsion!

In conclusion, I express the hope that Your Highness may once more have recovered the desired sleep, and remain ever

Your truly devoted

WILHELM, PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

I answered both letters together in the following communication:

FRIEDRICHSRUH,

January 6, 1888.

Your Royal Highness will graciously pardon me in that I have not already answered your gracious letters of November 29th and December 21st. I am so worn out with pain and sleeplessness that I can only with difficulty cope with the daily budget, and every attempt to work increases this weakness. I cannot answer these letters of yours otherwise than in my own hand, and my hand does not write as readily as of old. Moreover, in order to reply to these letters in a satisfactory fashion, I should have to write a historico-political work. But in accordance with the excellent proverb, that the best is the enemy of the good, I will answer them now as far as my energies will allow, rather than wait for greater energies in disrespectful silence. I hope

shortly to be in Berlin, and then to communicate by word of mouth what it exceeds my capacities to write.

I have the honor submissively to remind Your Royal Highness of the projected document of November 29th of last year, and I should like respectfully to advise you to burn it without further delay. If a draft of this kind were to become known *prematurely*, more than His Majesty the Kaiser and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince would be painfully affected by it; and secrecy is always uncertain nowadays. As it is, the only existing example, which I have kept here carefully under lock and key, may fall into dishonest hands; but if some twenty copies were prepared and deposited at seven different Legations, the possibilities of unfortunate accidents and imprudent men would be multiplied accordingly. And if finally the use intended were made of these documents, the fact, which would then become known, that they were drafted *before* the decease of the reigning sovereign, and had been kept in readiness, would create anything but a good impression. I have been greatly rejoiced that Your Royal Highness, in opposition to the strict ideas of your illustrious father, recognizes the political importance of the *voluntary* co-operation of the federated princes in the aims of the Empire. We should already have fallen during the past seventeen years of parliamentary government, had not the princes stood firmly and voluntarily by the Empire, because they themselves are contented so long as they retain what the Empire guarantees to them; and in the future, when the halo of 1870 has faded, the security of the Empire and its monarchical institutions will depend even more than now upon the unity of the princes. The latter are not subjects, but confederates of the Kaiser, and if the Federal Treaty is not observed they will not feel pledged to it, and will seek support, as they did formerly, from Russia, Austria, and France, as soon as the occasion appears favorable, just as they will always prefer to assume a nationalist policy so long as the Kaiser is the stronger. Thus it was a thousand years ago, and so will it be if the old

dynastic jealousy is again aroused. *Acheronta movebunt;* even the Parliamentary Opposition would acquire a very different power if the unity which has hitherto obtained in the Federal Council were to come to an end and Bavaria and Saxony were to make common cause with Richter and Windthorst. It is also a highly correct policy which makes Your Royal Highness wish to rank first among your royal cousins. But I would respectfully advise you to do this with the assurance that the new Kaiser will respect and protect the "stipulated rights of the confederate princes" just as conscientiously as his predecessors. It will not be advisable to lay particular stress upon the "erection" and "union" of the Empire as an *imminent* achievement, since by this the princes will understand a further centralization and a diminution of the rights remaining to them under the treaty. And if Saxony, Bavaria, and Würtemburg were to hold back, the spell of the national union, with its tremendous influence even in the new provinces of Prussia, and particularly abroad, would be broken. The nationalist ideal is more violently opposed to the Social and other Democrats than the Christian ideal; perhaps not in the country, but in the cities. I deplore it, but I see things as they are. However, I look for the firmest support of the monarchy not to these two ideals, but to a monarchical principle whose upholder is resolved not only to co-operate *diligently* in times of peace in the governmental business of the country, but also, in critical times, to fall, sword in hand, fighting for his right, on the steps of his throne, rather than yield. Such a ruler no German soldier will ever leave in the lurch, and the old saying of 1848 is still true: "Only soldiers avail against democrats." Priests might do much harm and be of little help; the most pious nations are the most revolutionary, and in 1848, in devout Pomerania, all the clergy were on the side of the government, yet the whole of Lower Pomerania elected socialistic representatives: mere day-laborers, publicans, and provision merchants.[1]

[1] Literally egg merchants. (*Trans.*)

Now I come to the contents of your gracious letter of the 21st of last month, and I should prefer to begin with the conclusion of that letter, and the expression of the consciousness that Frederick the Great was your ancestor, and I beg Your Royal Highness to follow him not merely as a general, but also as a statesman. It is not in the nature of the great king to set one's trust upon such factors as that of the Home Mission; the times are certainly different to-day, but the results to be obtained by speeches and societies will not afford, even to-day, any lasting foundation for monarchical institutions; of them the saying "soon come, soon gone" is true. The eloquence of opponents, malicious criticism, tactless co-operation, the German love of quarreling and lack of discipline, will readily prepare a disastrous issue for the best and most honorable cause. With such enterprises as the "Home Mission," particularly in its expansion as intended, Your Royal Highness's name, in my humble opinion, should not be so closely connected that it might be involved in any possible failure. Yet the consequences are beyond all computation if the society extends to all the great cities, and further adopts all the principles and tendencies which are already extant in the local associations, or may be forced upon them. In such associations what finally matters is not their material aim, but the fact that the leading *personalities* impress upon them their sign-manual and their control. They will be orators and clergymen, and very often ladies, even, factors which can only be utilized with circumspection if they are to be politically effective in the state; and I should not like to know that the people's opinion of their future sovereign was dependent upon their good behavior and their *tact*. Every mistake, every blunder, every example of excess of zeal in the activities of the society will give the republican newspapers occasion to identify the royal patron of the society with its errors.

Your Royal Highness cites a very large number of respectable names as those of persons in agreement with Your Royal Highness's sympathies. Among them I find none at

all of persons to whom I should care to intrust, *singly*, the responsibility for the future of the country; but then the question arises, how many of these gentlemen would have interested themselves in the Home Mission if they had not been aware that Your Royal Highness and the Princess were interested in the cause? I am not one to exert myself to arouse suspicion where confidence exists; but a monarch, as a matter of experience, cannot avoid all suspicion, and Your Royal Highness is too near that high office not to test every person he meets, as to whether the *cause* now under consideration is the thing that matters, or the future monarch and his favor. Those who wish to be honored by Your Royal Highness's confidence in the future will already, today, endeavor to establish a bond, a relationship, between themselves and the future Kaiser: and how many are without some secret wish or ambition? And who is there for whom, in our monarchical society, the endeavor to achieve some sort of closer relationship with the monarch will remain ineffectual? The Red Cross and other societies would not find so many supporters without Her Majesty the Kaiserin; the desire to be somehow connected with the Court comes to the aid of Christian charity. This is very gratifying and does not hurt the *Kaiserin*. But it is otherwise with the heir to the throne. Among the names which Your Royal Highness cites there are none at all without some *political* flavor, and behind the alacrity to further the wishes of the royal patron is the hope of obtaining the support of the future Kaiser, either for the individual or for the faction to which he belongs. Your Royal Highness will have to make use of men and parties, after you have ascended the throne, with circumspection, and with varying tactics, according to your own judgment; without the possibility of surrendering, outwardly, to one of our factions. There are seasons of liberalism and seasons of reaction, and even of the rule of force. In order to preserve the free hand which is necessary at such times Your Royal Highness, as successor to the throne, must beware lest public opinion should regard you

as adhering to a party movement. This would not fail to occur if Your Royal Highness were to stand in an organic relation to the Home Mission as its patron. The names of Benda and Miquel are for me only ornamental trimmings; both are future ministerial candidates; but in the sphere of the Mission they would soon give up the race in favor of Stöcker and other clergymen. In the very name of "Mission" there is a prognostic that the clergy will subscribe to the enterprise, even if the working member of the committee were not a general superintendent. I have nothing against Stöcker; he has for me only one defect as a politician—namely, that he is a priest; and as a priest his only fault is that he dabbles in politics. I can take pleasure in his courage and energy, and his eloquence, but he has an unlucky hand; the results which he obtains are only momentary; he is not able to establish them permanently; every equally good speaker, and there are such, snatches them from him; *it will be impossible to separate him from the Home Mission*, and his ready wit assures him of an authoritative influence therein over his colleagues and the lay members. Certainly, he has hitherto acquired a reputation which he will find more and more difficult to increase and maintain; every power in the *state* is stronger without him than with him, but in the arena of party conflict he is a Samson. He is at the head of those elements which are in flat opposition to the traditions of Frederick the Great, and on which a government of the German Empire could place no dependence. With his press and his little tale of supporters he has made life burdensome to me and has made the great Conservative party insecure and disunited. But the "Home Mission" is a soil from which he, like the giant Antæus, will continually draw fresh strength, and on which he will be invincible. The task of Your Royal Highness and of your future Ministers would be made essentially more difficult if it were to include the advocacy of the "Home Mission" and its organs. The Evangelical clergyman, as soon as he feels that he is strong enough, is as much addicted to theocracy as a Catholic, and

it is all the more difficult to deal with him in that he has no Pope over him. I am a devout Christian, but I fear that I might go astray in my belief if I, like the Catholic, were confined to the mediation of a priest between me and my God.

Your Royal Highness, in your letter of the 21st ult., expresses the opinion that I had occasion to make inquiry as to the question before us before I heard from Your Royal Highness; but I was first informed of the matter by Your Royal Highness's last letter, and my reply has *no* other basis than the contents of the said letter. What I knew of it before that was indeed enough to cause me some anxiety as to the press attacks upon Your Royal Highness, but I had too little belief in the importance of the affair to apply directly to Your Royal Highness. It was your letter of the 21st that first persuaded me of the contrary.

Your Royal Highness will accept with indulgence the candid frankness with which I express my opinion of the matter under consideration. The confidence with which Your Royal Highness has always honored me, and your assurance of my respectful attachment, induce me to count upon this indulgence. I am old and worn out and have no longer any other ambition than that of retaining the favor of the Kaiser and his successors, should I outlive my master. My sense of duty commands me honorably to serve the Imperial House and the country as long as I can, and it is part of this service that in answer to your letter I should urgently dissuade Your Royal Highness from assuming, before your accession to the throne, the shackles of any sort of connection with political or ecclesiastical societies. All associations whose initiation and whose activities are dependent upon individual members of the same, and upon their good will and personal opinions, may be employed very effectively as implements for attacking and destroying the existing state of things, but not for construction and preservation. Every glance of comparison at the results of the activities of conservative and revolutionary societies convinces me of this regrettable truth. With us only the

king, at the head of the Executive, is qualified, by way of legislation, to undertake the positive creation and maintenance of reforms of an enduring nature. The Imperial Message relating to social reforms would have remained a dead letter if its realization had been anticipated by the activities of free associations; they might very well exercise the function of critics, and utter complaints of wrongs, but they could not remedy the latter. The members of these societies are able to bear the certain failure of their enterprises all the more easily in that every one of them afterward impeaches *the others;* but an heir to the throne, as patron, will suffer more severely in the opinion of the public. To be a fellow member of the society with Your Royal Highness is, for every other member of the society, honorable and useful, without any risk; *only* for Your Royal Highness the reverse of this situation is true; every member feels himself uplifted and assumes an air of importance as being associated, through the society, with the heir to the throne, and it is only the latter who has, for all his reward for the importance which he bestows upon the society, nothing but the danger of failure through the fault of others. From a cutting from the *Freisinnige Zeitung* which reached me today and is now lying before me Your Royal Highness will graciously perceive how the democracy is already endeavoring to identify you with the so-called Christian Social faction. It prints, with wide spacing, the phrases by which Your Royal Highness's relations with this faction, and my own, are to be brought before the public. The *Freisinnige Zeitung* assuredly does not do this out of good will, or in order to do the Kaiser's government a service. The "Religious and Moral Education of Youth" is in itself an honorable aim, but I fear that beneath this profession other aims, of a political and ecclesiastical tendency, will be pursued. The false insinuation of Pastor Seydel, that my political opinions are the same as his own, and that I regard him and his colleagues in the first place as Christians, will compel me to contradict him, and then it will become evident that the

situation existing between these gentlemen and myself is much the same as that existing between myself and every other faction in opposition to His Majesty's present government.

I am in truth still in some danger of writing a book; I have suffered too much, during the past twenty years, from the poisonous views of the gentry of the *Kreuzzeitung* and the evangelical Windthorst[1] to be able to speak of them briefly. I close this overlong letter with my dutiful and heartfelt thanks for the favor and the gracious confidence of which Your Royal Highness's letter gives proof.

To this I received the following reply:

POTSDAM,
January 14, 1888.

I am in receipt of Your Highness's letter, and express my best thanks for the thorough and circumstantial development of the standpoint from which you believe that you ought to dissuade me from supporting the Home Mission. I can assure Your Highness that I have taken all possible pains to make your point of view my own. Before all, I fully and completely recognize the necessity of withholding myself from close contact, to say nothing of identification, with definite political party movements. But this has always been a principle of mine, by which I have strictly shaped my life and conduct. At the same time I cannot, with the best will in the world, convince myself that any sort of political "taking sides" can be recognized in my furtherance of the efforts of the Home Mission. This was, is, and, so far as in us lies, will always in future remain simply and solely a work of charity which looks to the spiritual health and sickness of the poorer classes; and I cannot, in spite of your letter, abandon my confident opinion that Your Highness yourself, upon closer consideration, will not refuse to admit the justice of this

[1] Ludwig Windthorst (1812–91), Hanoverian solicitor; Minister, then leader of the Center Party in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies and the Reichstag.

assumption. It is accordingly impossible, after the fullest consideration of the objections advanced by Your Highness, to withdraw myself from a work of whose importance for the general weal I am firmly convinced—a conviction which I am assured is now widespread and well founded by the countless letters and addresses from all parts of the kingdom, particularly from the Catholics and the lower laboring classes of the population—yet I am far from unwilling to recognize, with Your Highness, that it is desirable and necessary to remove by a spontaneous action the grounds of the erroneous supposition that this is a matter of favoring individual political efforts. To this end I shall allow Court Chaplain Stöcker to decide to withdraw from the official leadership of the City Mission, and this will be made public in a fitting manner, not compromising to himself. Before such a manifestation, I think, every aspersion upon my intentions and my position must necessarily be silenced —if not, then woe to them if I have to give orders!—and Your Highness will at the same time be disposed to recognize what a high value I set upon dispersing, as far as I am able, even the slightest shadows of a difference of opinion betwen us.

WILHELM, PRINCE OF PRUSSIA.

The foregoing correspondence evoked the first passing fit of irritability on the part of the Prince toward myself. He had believed that I should respond to his letter with an acknowledgment in the style of his aspiring followers, while I had held it to be my duty to warn him, in my autograph letter, which may perhaps be considered a trifle didactic and whose length considerably exceeded my capacity for work, of the exertions by which persons and cliques were seeking to assure themselves of the patronage of the heir to the throne. The Prince's answer, both in its form and in its

contents, left me in no doubt whatsoever that the lack of recognition accorded to his efforts, and my warning criticism, had put him out of humor. In the concluding part of his letter he expresses, in a princely fashion, that which he was afterward to express in the imperial fashion, "Whosoever opposes me, him will I shatter."

When I now look back I assume that the Kaiser, during the twenty-one months when I was his Chancellor, was only with difficulty able to suppress his inclination to get rid of an inherited mentor; until this inclination suddenly exploded, and a separation which, if I had known the Kaiser's wish, I would have brought about with an avoidance of all external sensation, was forced upon me suddenly, in an injurious and, I might say, an insulting fashion.

Nevertheless, events were so far in correspondence with my advice that participation in the proposed Christian work was, to begin with, confined to less and less exclusive circles. The fact that the preliminary scene, of which I had disapproved, had taken place in Count Waldersee's house contributed to put this prominent personality even more out of humor with the Prince's circle than would otherwise have been the case. At an earlier period I had for a long time been friendly with him, and had learned to estimate his value, in the Franco-Prussian War, as a soldier and a political colleague; so that later it offended my ideas of what was fitting to recommend him to the Kaiser for a military position of a political nature.

After further official contact with the count I became doubtful of his political suitability, and as Count Moltke,[1] in his position as Chief of the General Staff, required an *ad latus*, I had occasion to inquire into the opinions prevailing in military circles before I submitted my views to the Kaiser, as by him commanded. The result was that I called His Majesty's attention to General von Caprivi,[2] although I knew that the latter had not as good an opinion of me as I had of him. My idea that Caprivi ought to be Moltke's successor was frustrated, I believe, in the last resort, by the difficulty of establishing, between two such independent characters, the *modus vivendi* which was necessary in a dual control of the General Staff. This task seemed easy of solution to the highest circles, inasmuch as the position of an *ad latus* to Count Moltke would be conferred upon General von Waldersee; and in his new position the latter would be brought into closer contact with the monarch and his successors upon the throne. In the sphere of nonmilitary politics his name first became known in wider circles—and, to tell the truth, in connection with that of Court Chaplain Stöcker—through the discussion relating to the Home Mission which was held in his house.

On New-Year's Eve, 1887, at the Lehrter railway station, from which he was traveling to Friedrichs-

[1] Hellmut Count von Moltke, General Field Marshal, born October 26, 1800; died April 24, 1891.

[2] Leo Count von Caprivi, born February 24, 1831; died February 6, 1899; 1882, Divisional Commander in Metz; 1883–88, Chief of the Admiralty; 1888, Army Corps Commander in Hanover; 1890–94, Imperial Chancellor.

ruh, my son met the Prince, who was on the look-out for him, and begged him to tell me that the Stöcker affair was now quite harmless; he added that my son must be thoroughly sick of the affair, but he, the Prince, had interceded for him.

CHAPTER II

THE GRAND DUKE OF BADEN

According to my observations, which were founded on His Majesty's statements, the Grand Duke of Baden,[1] who had supported me in a willing and effectual manner at an earlier period, had, as far as I was concerned, a disturbing influence upon the Kaiser's resolutions during the latter period of my administration. Amenable earlier than most of the other confederate princes to the persuasion that the German question could be solved only by the furtherance of Prussia's efforts toward hegemony, he came to oppose the Nationalist policy with all his might—not with the assiduity of the Duke of Coburg,[2] but with greater consideration for the Prussian dynasty, to which he was nearly related, and without the fitful intercourse with the Emperor Napoleon, the Court of Vienna, and the ruling circles in England and Belgium which the duke maintained. His political relations were confined within the limits which the German interests and his family connection indicated to him. He had no need, real or apparent, to concern himself in the more important

[1] Friedrich I, Grand Duke of Baden, brother-in-law to Wilhelm I, born September 9, 1826; died September 28, 1907.

[2] Ernst II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, born 1818, died 1893.

transactions of European politics, and was not, like the Coburg brothers, exposed to the temptations which resided in their belief in their own superior capacity for the handling of political questions. For this reason, too, his environment had more influence upon his views than upon the Coburgish overestimation of self displayed by Duke Ernst and Prince Albert,[1] which had its roots in the halo of wisdom that surrounded the first King of the Belgians,[2] because he had adroitly looked after his own interests.

There had been times when the grand duke, under the stress of external conditions, was not in a position to give practical proof of his conviction of the manner in which the German question ought to be solved; times which were connected with the name of the Minister von Meysenbug[3] and the year 1866. In both cases he found himself confronted by a *force majeure*. In the chief instance he was always inclined to obey the best—the Nationalistic—impulses of his craving for popularity, and his effort in this direction could only suffer by a parallel effort to obtain recognition in the civil sphere, in the direction indicated by the example of Louis Philippe, even where the two could with difficulty be reconciled. That the grand duke was, in the difficult time of the sojourn at Versailles, when I was in conflict with

[1] Albert, Duke of Saxe-Coburg, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria, born 1819, died 1861.

[2] Leopold I, Prince of Saxe-Coburg, born 1790; first King of Belgium 1831; died 1865.

[3] Wilhelm Freiherr von Meysenbug (1813–66); 1851, Minister of Baden in Berlin; 1856–60, Prime Minister of Baden.

foreign, feminine, and military influences, the only one among the German princes who gave me his support, before the King, in the matter of the imperial dignity, and that he helped me actively and effectively to overcome his Prussian particularistic reluctance is a well-known fact. The Crown Prince, where his father was concerned, displayed his wonted discretion, which prevented his effective assertion of his Nationalist convictions.

The good will of the grand duke was mine for decades after the peace, if I ignore the temporary differences which arose when the interests of Baden, as he or his officials conceived them, clashed with the imperial policy.

Herr von Roggenbach, who for a time passed for the *spiritus rector* of Baden politics, had, in my presence, at the time of the peace negotiations of 1866, expressed himself as in favor of a diminution of Bavaria and an enlargement of Baden. To him was traced back the rumor put about in 1881 that Baden was to be made a kingdom.

That the grand duke wished to enlarge the area, if not of his territory, at least of his activities, was made manifest later by the movement in favor of the restoration of military and political relations between Baden and Alsace-Lorraine. I refused to co-operate in the execution of such a plan, because I could not avoid the impression that Baden's position, as regards the improvement of the situation in Alsace, and the transformation of French into German sympathies, was perhaps

even less well qualified, and in any case not more advantageous, than that of the present imperial administration would be.

In the administration of Baden the kind of bureaucracy adapted to South German habits—one might call it a government by clerks—was even more rigorously developed than in the other South German states, including Nassau. Bureaucratic overdevelopment is not unknown in connection with North Germany also, especially in the higher circles, and will, in consequence of the present administration of local self-government (*lucus a non lucendo*), penetrate even into rural circles; but hitherto its adepts have with us been prominent officials, whose sense of justice is made more acute by their degree of education; yet in South Germany the importance of the official class, which with us belongs to the subordinate classes, or is on the fringe of them, is greater, and the government policy, which even before 1848 was calculated more with an eye to popularity than was usual elsewhere in Germany, proved, in time of disorder, to be precisely that which had established itself least firmly, and whose root connection with the dynasty was the weakest. Baden was in those years the only state in which the experience of Duke Karl of Brunswick[1] was repeated, inasmuch as the sovereign had to leave his country.

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[1] Karl Duke of Brunswick, born 1804; succeeded 1823; on September 7, 1830, was driven out of the country by a national uprising; died in Geneva 1873.

The ruling sovereign had grown up in the tradition that striving for popularity and accommodating oneself to every movement of public opinion is the foundation of the modern art of government. Louis Philippe was a sort of pattern for the external attitude of the constitutional monarch, and since he had played his part as such on the European stage of Paris, he acquired, for the German princes, a significance not unlike that possessed by the Paris fashions for German ladies. That even the military side of the political life of the state had not remained untouched by the system of the Citizen King was shown by the revolt of the Baden troops, which so far had not occurred in so ignominious a fashion in any other German state. In these retrospective meditations I have always had my misgivings as to cooperating to the end that the development of affairs in the imperial territory[1] shall give way to the governmental policy of Baden.

However Nationalistic in his ideas the grand duke might be when left to himself, he was, nevertheless, not always able to resist the particularist policy of his officials, based upon material interests, and in the event of a conflict it would naturally be difficult for him to sacrifice the local interests of Baden to those of the Empire.

A latent conflict lay in the rivalry of the imperial railways with the railways of Baden, and this conflict became apparent in connection with Baden's relations with Switzerland. To the Baden

[1] Alsace-Lorraine. (*Trans.*)

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officials the cultivation and reinforcement of Social Democracy in the Swiss cantons was less inconvenient than prejudice to, or complaints from, the numerous subjects of Baden who were members of the party and were making a livelihood in Switzerland. That the imperial government, in its behavior to its neighbor state, pursued no other aim than that of supporting the Conservative elements in Switzerland against the influence and the propagandist pressure of foreign and domestic Social Democracy was a fact of which the Baden government could entertain no doubt. It was said that we were negotiating, with the most respectable Swiss citizens, an agreement which was unexpressed, but was at the same time complied with, and which, thanks to the support which we guaranteed our friends, led practically to the result that the central political administration of Switzerland obtained a firmer position and a stricter control than of old in respect of the German Socialists and the Democratic politics of the cantons.

Whether Herr von Marschall[1] had made this state of affairs clear in his report to Karlsruhe I do not know; I do not remember that he ever sought or had a conversation with me in the seven years during which he was the diplomatic representative of Baden. But through his intimacy

[1] Adolf Hermann Freiherr von Marschall von Bieberstein (1842–1912); a Baden jurist; 1871, Attorney General; 1878–81, Member of the Reichstag; 1883–90, Baden's Minister in Berlin, and Plenipotentiary to the Federal Council; 1890, Secretary of State of the Foreign Office; 1894, Prussian Minister of State; 1897, German Ambassador in Constantinople.

with my colleague Boetticher[1] and his relations with his colleagues at the Foreign Office he personally was, at any rate, fully informed. I was told that he had sought for an even longer period to win the sympathies of the grand duke and to create an antipathy against those persons who had obstructed his view upward. I remember, in connection with him, a remark of Count Harry Arnim's, made at a time when the latter used often to converse with me.

The traffic across the French frontier, again, from the standpoint of Baden, is to be regarded and treated otherwise than according to the imperial policy. The number of the citizens of Baden who find employment in Switzerland and Alsace as laborers, shop assistants, and waiters, and who, apart from Alsace, are interested in an undisturbed connection with Lyons and Paris, is very considerable, and it was scarcely to be expected of the grand ducal officials that they would subordinate their administrative affairs to an imperial policy whose political aims were beneficial to the Empire, but whose local disadvantages were burdensome to Baden.

From such causes of friction arose a press campaign between the semiofficial and even official organs of Baden and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.

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[1] Karl Heinrich von Boetticher (1833–1907); Prussian jurist; 1869–72 in the Ministry of the Interior; then in the Provincial Administration, and a Conservative member of the Reichstag; 1880, Secretary of State of the Interior and Prussian Minister of State; from 1881 Chancellor-substitute; 1888–97, vice-president of the Prussian Cabinet.

In respect of its general tone neither side was free from blame. The controversial style of the Baden newspapers was like that of a public prosecutor, and departed as far from the rules of ordinary courtesy as did that of the Berlin periodical, which I could not keep free of the acrid language which was a peculiarity of my then friend Herr von Rottenburg, the head of the Imperial Chancellery, as a gentleman learned in the law, for I had not always time to concern myself with the editorial offices of publicist journals, even in the way of controlling them merely.

I remember that late one evening in 1885 I suddenly received a command from the Crown Prince to go to the Dutch Palace, where I found His Royal Highness and the grand duke, the latter in an ungracious mood, as a result of an article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, which was engaged in a controversy with the semiofficial journal of Baden. I have no fuller recollection of the circumstances of this controversy, nor do I know whether the article referred to in the Berlin newspaper was officially inspired. It might have been, without coming to my knowledge before going to press; the occasions on which I found time and inclination to influence the output of the press were much rarer than the press, and therefore the public, assumed. I did so only in connection with such questions or personal attacks as had a particular interest for me, and weeks and months went by, even when I was in Berlin, without my having found either time or inclina-

tion to read the articles for which I was held responsible, to say nothing of writing them or having them written. But the grand duke, like everybody else, regarded me as responsible for the expressions of the journal referred to in connection with this (to him) vexatious affair.

The manner in which he reacted to this performance on the part of the press was peculiar. The Kaiser was at that time seriously ill, and the grand duchess had come to look after him. In these circumstances the grand duke had made the article in question an occasion for giving his brother-in-law, the Crown Prince, to understand that in consequence of this infamous outrage he would immediately leave Berlin with his wife and would not conceal the reason for his departure. Now as a matter of fact the attentions which the Kaiser received from his daughter were not necessary to him as a patient, but were a demonstration of filial affection which he endured with knightly courtesy. But it was just this peculiar characteristic of his which was predominant in his relations with his wife and daughter, and every discord within the narrow family circle had a depressing and disheartening effect upon him.

I therefore did my utmost to spare the sick sovereign any experiences of this kind, and—well, what it was that I did I no longer remember, but at all events I did all that was possible, in a conference of more than two hours, with the vigorous and effectual assistance of the Crown Prince, to pacify his royal brother-in-law. Probably the rec-

onciliation was effected by my protest against any hypothesis of official ill will in the publication of a new and tendencious article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. I remember that it dealt with the criticism of some measure of the Baden Cabinet, and that the irritability of the grand duke allowed me to conjecture that he had, in this particular case, personally interfered in the business of the state, as he held such interference to be compatible with the observation of constitutional principles.

I learned from the court circles in Berlin and Karlsruhe that the cause of the change which seemed to occur in the grand duke's mood during the latter part of my official activity was the fact that while he was present in Berlin, harassed by the affair concerning himself and his wife, I had not given sufficient attention to the intercourse usual in court life. I do not know whether this is correct, and I am not qualified to judge how far the intrigues of the Baden court had been at work, whose mouthpiece, I was told, in addition to Roggenbach, was Court Marshal von Gemmingen, whose daughter the Freiherr von Marschall had married. It is possible that the latter, the Attorney General of Baden, and shortly afterward the representative of Baden on the Federal Council, did not regard his career as ending with his promotion to the presidency of the Foreign Office of the German Empire; and the fact is that between him and Herr von Boetticher, during the last part of my administration, an intimacy

had developed which was based upon a common and feminine interest in questions of rank and precedence.

Although, under the repeated attacks of ill humor to which the grand duke was subject, his good will for me gradually cooled, yet I do not believe that he consciously aimed at my removal from office. His influence over the Kaiser, which I have mentioned as interfering with my policy, made itself felt in questions of the Kaiser's attitude toward the working classes, and may be traced in connection with the Socialist laws. I have been credibly informed that the Kaiser, in the winter of 1890, before he suddenly decided to abandon his intention of offering resistance, as I had counseled, consulted the grand duke, and that the latter, in the spirit of the traditions of Baden, recommended the winning over rather than the overcoming of the adversary; but he had been surprised and displeased when the change in His Majesty's intentions led to my dismissal.

His advice would not have taken effect if His Majesty had not been inclined to take steps to insure that a proper appreciation of suitable action on the part of the monarch should not be further prejudiced by any doubt as to whether the Kaiser's resolutions originated with the Kaiser or with the Chancellor. The "new ruler" felt the need not only of getting rid of his mentor, but of permitting of no eclipse in the present or the future, such as might ensue from the unrolling of a cloud from the Chancellery, perhaps like the cloud

evoked by Richelieu or Mazarin. An incidental remark made by Count Waldersee at breakfast, in the presence of the aide-de-camp, Adolf von Bülow, had made a lasting impression on him. It was to the effect "that Frederick the Great would never have been the Great if on his accession to power he had found and retained a Minister of Bismarck's importance and authority."

After my dismissal the grand duke sided against me. When in February, 1891, the municipal authorities of Baden-Baden were moved to offer me the freedom of the city, he sent for the chief burgomaster and called him to account for such want of consideration to the Kaiser. A little later he had a conversation with Maxime du Camp, the author, who was living in Baden-Baden. The author brought me into the conversation, but the grand duke cut him short with the remark, "*Il n'est qu'un vieux radoteur*" ("He is only an old driveler").

CHAPTER III

BOETTICHER

KAISER WILHELM II felt no need of collaborators with opinions of their own, who could approach him, in their own department, with the authority of expert knowledge and experience. The word "experience" on my lips would irritate him, and occasionally evoke the remark: "Experience? Yes, of course, I haven't any." In order to make expert suggestions to his Ministers he would apply to their subordinates and obtain information from them, or from private people, on the basis of which he might take the initiative in his relations with the departmental Ministers. Besides Hinzpeter[1] and others I found Herr Boetticher especially useful to me in this connection.

I had known his father,[2] and in 1851 had sat with him upon the Bund, and was attracted by the exceptionally pleasing appearance of the son, who was more talented than the father, while his inferior in honesty and firmness of character. Through my influence with Kaiser Wilhelm I, I

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[1] Georg Ernst Hinzpeter (1827–1907), Doctor of Philosophy and gymnasium teacher; from 1866 Prince Wilhelm's tutor; an adviser and helper of the Kaiser, and in 1904 a member of the Prussian House of Peers.

[2] Doctor Boetticher, from 1850 Prussian Commissary of the Interior in the Central Administration of the Bundestag at Frankfurt.

furthered the son's career fairly quickly; he became, on my recommendation, governor—*Oberpräsident*—in Schleswig, Secretary of State, and Minister of State, entirely through my efforts, but he was Minister always only in the capacity of my amanuensis; an aide-de-camp, or adjutant, as they say in St. Petersburg, who, by the Kaiser's wish, had merely to represent my policy in the Cabinet and the Federal Council, especially when I was unable to be present. He had no other administrative duties than the task of supporting me. This was a position which, at my suggestion, was first held by the Minister Delbrück, and which was finally created, in order to represent and relieve me, by His Majesty. Delbrück was president of the Federal, later the Imperial, Chancellery, where he was in constitutional law the highest responsible ministerial officer of the Imperial Chancellor, and was then appointed Minister, so that he might support the Imperial Chancellor in the Cabinet and represent him in his absence. Delbrück had represented my views in a conscientious manner, even when his own ideas upon certain questions differed from mine, and retired because this representation was in such definite contradiction to his own convictions that he did not believe it possible to overlook it. On his own recommendation he was followed by the Hessian ex-Minister, Von Hofmann, who was regarded as manageable, and had no political past to trouble about. Moreover, he undertook the direction of a branch department of which the scope had been

very materially reduced, and which went by the name of the "Board of Trade." He assumed that in addition to fostering German trade he had particular duties and privileges in respect of Prussian trade, in the sphere of legislation; and he misused the independence conferred upon him by this position, which he himself had desired, in order to prepare, without my knowledge, drafts of bills affecting imperial affairs, which did not meet with my assent, especially such as in my opinion overstepped the limits of labor protection and verged upon the sphere of compulsion, in the form of a limitation of the personal independence and authority of the worker and father of a family; from which, in the long run, I anticipated no beneficial effects. Hence, as the repeated remonstrances (which I made in respect of these proposals which for me meant opposition and more assiduous work) to the Minister of this department of the superior Councilors of the Board of Trade remained without effect, I induced Field Marshal von Manteuffel to accept Herr von Hofmann as Minister in the Imperial Provinces.

I then begged the Kaiser to appoint Herr von Boetticher as Hofmann's successor, and I was able to promise myself, from this official, who was skilled in matters of parliamentary procedure, the support which this post of Minister without a department, in the shape of an *ad latus* to the Chancellor and Prime Minister, was exclusively created to provide. Herr von Boetticher was appointed as my subordinate in the imperial service, as

Secretary of State of the Interior, and in the Prussian service as my official assistant, to support me by representing my views, but to do nothing independently of me. He performed this duty willingly and skillfully for years, and advanced his own opinions in my presence only with great reserve, and, I presume, only at the instigation of parliamentary or other circles. A definitive expression of my opinion was always enough to insure his final assent and co-operation. He possessed notable endowments for an under-secretary, was an excellent parliamentary debater, a skillful negotiator, and had a talent for bringing intellectual values of the higher currency home to the people in the form of small change, and by the sort of good-humored honesty peculiar to him he was able to exert influence on their behalf. That he was never sufficiently settled in his opinions to represent them steadfastly in the Reichstag, let alone to the Kaiser, was not essentially a defect in the sphere of operations assigned to him; and while he was morbidly irritable in the matter of orders and rank, so that when his expectations were disappointed he would burst into tears, I was successful in my efforts to spare and to gratify his sensibilities. My confidence in him was so great that after the departure of Herr von Puttkamer I recommended him as his successor in the post of vice-president of the Cabinet. In this position, too, he remained the representative of the President, myself. There is no room for dualism in the post of Prime Minister. I had ac-

customed myself to treat him as a personal friend, who on his side was perfectly contented with our relations. I was all the less prepared for a disappointment because I was in a position to do him a substantial service in respect of his family interests, which were seriously endangered by the debts and misdemeanors of his father-in-law, a bank director in Stralsund.

I cannot exactly determine the precise moment when he first surrendered to the Kaiser's temptations and began to keep in closer touch with him than with me. The possibility that he could act dishonestly toward me was so far from my thought that I first had proof of it when in 1890, in the Crown Council, the Ministry, and the civil service he publicly opposed me, supporting the Kaiser's suggestions, my fundamentally adverse opinion of which was known to him. Communications which reached me later, and a retrospective consideration of incidents to which I vouchsafed little attention at the moment, have since convinced me that Herr von Boetticher had already for a long time profited by the personal intercourse with the Kaiser which he enjoyed as my representative, as well as his relations with the diplomatic representative of Baden, Herr von Marschall, and through his father-in-law, Gemmingen, with the Grand Duke of Baden, in order to establish closer relations with His Majesty at my expense, and to fit myself into the gap which existed between the conceptions of the youthful Kaiser and the circumspection of the gray-haired Chancellor.

The temptation to which Herr von Boetticher found himself exposed, the fascination of novelty which his monarchical duties had for the Kaiser, and my confiding negligence in business, which was exploited to the detriment of my position, were, I am told, aggravated by a feminine striving for rank, and, in Baden, by an impatient thirst for influence. Semiofficial articles, which I attributed to the well-informed pen of my former colleague, laid stress upon a claim of Boetticher's to my gratitude, in that he had taken great pains, in January and February, 1890, to mediate between the Kaiser and myself and to win me over to the Kaiser's opinions. In this (as I believe) inspired performance lies the full confession of the falseness of the situation. The official duty of Herr von Boetticher was not to work for the subjection of an experienced Chancellor to the will of a youthful Kaiser, but to support the Chancellor in his responsible task in the presence of the Kaiser. Had he confined himself to this, his official duty, he would have remained within the boundaries of his natural qualifications, on the strength of which he was appointed to his position. His relations with the Kaiser had in my absence become more intimate than my own, so that he felt himself strong enough to leave his chief's official and written directions unexecuted, conscious that he could rely upon a more exalted source of support.

That he had aimed not merely at the Kaiser's favor, but also at my dismissal and his succession as Prime Minister, I concluded from a series of

circumstances of which some first came to my knowledge at a later period. In January, 1890, he told the Kaiser, in the house of the Freiherr von Bodenhausen, that I was fully determined to resign, and about the same time he told me that the Kaiser was already negotiating with my successor.

In the first days of the month aforesaid he visited me for the last time at Friedrichsruh for the purpose of discussing matters of business. As I learned later, he had already insinuated to the Kaiser that I had become incapable of transacting business, through the immoderate use of morphia. Whether this suggestion was made to the Kaiser directly by Boetticher or through the medium of the Grand Duke of Baden I have not been able to determine; at all events, His Majesty questioned my son Herbert about the matter, and was rebuked by him and by Professor Schweninger, from whom the Kaiser learned that the suggestion was a pure invention. Unfortunately the professor's vivacity prevented the conversation from leading up to a complete explanation of the origin of the calumny. The motive of the Kaiser's inquiry could only have arisen out of Boetticher's visit to Friedrichsruh, since at that time I had no other personal relations with him.

Even at the time of his visit in January he had spoken to me in favor of the concessions which afterward formed the subject of the modifications in the imperial manifesto of February the 9th.

I had opposed this manifesto, firstly because

I did not consider it advantageous that the worker should be forbidden by law to dispose of the working capacities of himself and the members of his family at certain hours and on certain occasions; and secondly, because I shrank from the idea of fresh burdens upon industry which would affect the future of both worker and employer, so long as their practical consequences were not more clearly established than hitherto. Moreover, it seemed to me, after the incidents of the miners' strike in 1899, that in the first place we should pursue not the method of concessions, but that of defense against the too luxuriant growth of Social Democracy. Before and after Christmas I had intended to take part in the deliberations concerning the Socialist bill, and to advance the proposition that Social Democracy in a higher degree, as it existed abroad, involved the monarchy and the state in a danger of war, and must be regarded, on the part of the state, not as a legal question, but as a matter of civil war and internal power. This opinion of mine was known to Herr Boetticher, and through him without a doubt to the Kaiser as well, and in this knowledge of the situation I think I see the reason why His Majesty did not desire my presence in Berlin, and caused the expression of this desire to be repeated to me, directly and indirectly, in a manner which for me had the character of an imperial command. If I had taken up a more rigorous position, publicly, as Chancellor, I should have rendered more difficult the Kaiser's conciliatory attitude toward

Social Democracy, to which he was then already won over by the Grand Duke of Baden, Boetticher, Hinzpeter, Berlepsch,[1] Heyden,[2] and Douglas,[3] and which, announced by Herr von Boetticher in the Crown Council of the 24th of January, came as a startling surprise to me and other Ministers. If the plan had been realized which the Kaiser favored in February, but which His Majesty, I believe, under the influence of the Grand Duke of Baden, abandoned a few days later, which was that I should remain Imperial Chancellor while resigning all my Prussian appointments, Herr von Boetticher might have hoped to become Prussian Prime Minister, for as vice-president of the Council he had the affair in his own hands. Thereby he and his wife would have been promoted to the highest rank, to the so-called field marshals' class. I would not willingly have recommended him for this position. I feared that unrest would result from the events of 1889 and the encouraging mood of the Kaiser, and with regard to the Liberal sympathies of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of War (Police and Army) and the apathy of the Minister of Justice (Attorney-

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[1] Hans Hermann Freiherr von Berlepsch, born 1843; Prussian jurist; 1884, president of the Government Board in Düsseldorf; 1889, governor in the Rhine Province (Coblenz); 1890, Minister of Commerce and president of the International Conference for the Protection of Labor.

[2] August Heyden (1827–97). A mining expert and painter of mining subjects; since 1882 Professor of Historical Costume in the Berlin Academy; 1890, member of the Staatsrath.

[3] Hugo Sholto Count von Douglas (1837–1912), German politician, jurist, officer, and industrial magnate; from 1882 member of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies (Free Conservative); 1890, member of the Staatsrath.

General) I recommended that the presidency of the Council should at least lie in military hands.

The fact that Boetticher, when I once more took part in the ministerial discussion of all questions in which the deviation of my opinions from the Kaiser's was known to him, as the latter were communicated to him earlier than to me, now opposed me, in His Majesty's presence and in the Cabinet, as the advocate of the imperial will, was, to my political and, I might say, historical comprehension, a gratifying symptom of the strength which the monarchical power had recovered since 1862. The Minister who, at my request had been appointed as my assistant, now took over the leadership of the opposition against me, as soon as he believed that he could establish himself in the imperial favor by so doing, and countered my pertinent scruples exclusively by the plea that we had to fulfill the imperial wishes and must accomplish something to satisfy His Majesty.

CHAPTER IV

HERRFURTH

On his accession to the throne the Kaiser was determined to restore to office the Minister for the Interior, Von Puttkamer, dismissed by his father on his deathbed; only for the sake of decorum the restoration could not follow too quickly upon his dismissal and the death of the Emperor Friedrich. At his command I offered Herr Herrfurth the Ministry of the Interior, on the condition that he should exchange it for a governorship, if possible that of Coblenz, directly the Kaiser considered that the time had come to recall Herr von Puttkamer. Herrfurth declared himself ready to accept it, with the remark that in the meantime he would strictly follow Puttkamer's policy. After he had become Minister of the Interior in this manner, on July 2, 1888, he proceeded to exert himself to make the temporary Ministry a permanent one, playing on His Majesty's appetite for reform. I was surprised, when I reported to the Kaiser that the moment for restoring Puttkamer appeared to have come, to receive the reply that he had now got used to the "mountain goblin"[1] and wished to retain him.

[1] *Rübezahl.*—"Number Nip," a mountain sprite. (*Trans.*)

How had the goblin so overcome the Kaiser's former antipathy for him that he was now preferred before Herr von Puttkamer, whose *restitutio in integrum* the Kaiser had stipulated? I venture to assume that the prospect of satisfying an urgent need in the province of rural self-government with the acquiescence of all those interested, and of abolishing the general sense of oppression due to the remnants of the feudal system, formed the substratum of the imperial favor.

Herrfurth had spoken to me, even before his appointment to the Ministry, of an intended reform of the laws affecting the village communities in the old provinces, and I had urgently begged him to leave the matter alone; the rural population of the old provinces was living in a state of profound peace; no one felt any need of change, with the exception, possibly, of the villages which had acquired an urban character, for the most part in the neighborhood of large cities; the great mass of the rural population was living in peace and quiet under the present system of rural and local self-government, while there is nothing in common between a manorial community and a village community, except that on both sides there is a disinclination for change. I begged him urgently not to disturb the concord existing in the rural districts by the introduction of theoretical apples of discord, or to evoke a conflict by the suggestion of insoluble questions of principle, for which there had so far been no real occasion.

Herrfurth rejoined that at all events there was

occasion in the existence of the "pygmy parishes" which were in no position to fulfill their duties as communities. I denied that this proved the need of a destructive revolution, which reminded one of the year 1848, with its constitution-making and readjustment of all the conditions of life.

After this understanding with my colleague, and after confidential discussions of the problems existing in the winter of 1888–89, I was surprised to receive a visit from a deputation of peasants from Schönhausen, who laid before me a lithographed sheet of questions received from the Landrath, from which one might perceive the intention of the government to remodel the conditions of our rural communities upon a new principle. To their lively satisfaction I was able to tell them that so long as I was a Minister I should not give my consent to such schemes, and also that I did not believe that the plan would meet with His Majesty's approval. By making inquiries in other provinces I learned that there, too, the authorities had made the same prearranged inquiries of the agricultural communities.

When I told Herrfurth that I could not have believed that after our discussion he would calmly have proceeded with his plans of reform, without the knowledge of the Cabinet, I obtained only feeble and evasive replies of such a nature that my suspicions were already aroused that my colleague had assured himself, behind my back, of the Kaiser's sympathy with his efforts, and that the prospect of the great effect to be produced by

these reforms had been the means of winning the Kaiser's favor and attaining a definitive position as Minister. If at that time he had not been actually aware of the Kaiser's habit of covering his retreat, he could hardly have proceeded so far in the face of my known conviction, and that of the Cabinet, as inquiry informed me he had done.[1]

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[1] The *Landgemeindeordnung* (Local Government bill) was passed by the Chamber of Deputies by 327 votes against 23, and Herrfurth was congratulated upon this result by a telegram from the Kaiser, sent from Eisenach. The House of Peers gave a different wording to one paragraph, which on June 1st was accepted by the Chamber of Deputies by 206 votes against 99 Conservative votes.

CHAPTER V

THE CROWN COUNCIL OF JANUARY 24TH

WHEN the Kaiser first began to entertain the idea of setting me aside, or when the resolve to do so was matured, I do not know. The idea that he would not share the glory of his future government with me was already familiar to him as a Prince, and was now ripe for realization. It was natural that place hunters—who in those days were described, by a current "Berlinism," as "civil and military cobblers"—should attach themselves to the future heir to the throne as long as he was in the accessible position of a young officer. The more probable it seemed that the Prince would succeed to the throne soon after his grandfather's death the more animated were the efforts to win the future Kaiser's support in respect of personal or party aims. The cleverly calculated phrase applied by Count Waldersee had already been used against me—namely, that if Frederick the Great had had such a Chancellor he would not have been Frederick the Great.

The difference of opinion which had arisen out of the Stöcker affair, as discussed in the correspondence between Prince Wilhelm and myself (in his letter of January 14, 1888), ended in at

least an outward reconciliation. At the dinner which I gave on May 1, 1888, the Prince, who in the meantime had become the successor to the throne, proposed me a toast in which, according to the text published by the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, he said:

To make use of a military illustration, I regard our present situation as that of a regiment advancing to the assault. The commander of the regiment has fallen; the next in command, although sorely wounded, nevertheless rides boldly onward. There all eyes follow the colors, which the bearer waves high overhead. So Your Highness holds aloft the imperial standard. The innermost wish of our hearts is that you may yet long be spared, in common with our beloved and revered father, to hold on high the banner of the Empire. God bless and protect him and Your Highness!

On January 1, 1889, I received the following letter:

Dear Prince: The year which brought us such heavy afflictions and irreparable losses is coming to an end. The thought that you stand faithfully beside me and are entering upon the New Year with fresh strength fills me with gladness and consolation. With my whole heart I pray that you may be granted happiness, prosperity, and, before all, lasting health, and I hope to God that I may be long permitted to work with you for the welfare and the greatness of our Fatherland.

Wilhelm, I.R.

Until the autumn no symptoms of any change of mood were observable; but in October, in connection with the Kaiser's presence in Russia, His Majesty was surprised that I advised against the

intended second visit to Russia, and by his behavior to me gave me to understand that he was not well disposed toward me. This incident will find its proper place in a later chapter.[1] A few days later the Kaiser set out on his journey to Constantinople, during which he sent me friendly telegrams relating to his impressions from Messina, Athens, and the Dardanelles. None the less, it came to my knowledge later that he had heard "too much talk of the Chancellor" while abroad. An eventual breach over this matter was increased by the witty and calculated remarks of my opponents, which referred among other things to the "firm of Bismarck and Son."

In the meantime I had gone to Friedrichsruh on the 16th of October. In my old age I was not for my own sake anxious to retain my position, and if I could have foreseen my early departure I would have arranged it in a manner more convenient to the Kaiser and more dignified for myself. That I did not foresee it proves that in spite of forty years' practice I had not become a courtier, and that politics absorbed me rather than the question of my position, to which no love of power or ambition chained me, but only my sense of duty.

In the course of January, 1890, it came to my knowledge how keenly interested the Kaiser had become in the so-called "protection of labor" legislation, and that he had conferred upon the subject with the King of Saxony[2] and the Grand

[1] Chap. x.
[2] Albert (1828–1902).

Duke of Baden, who had come to Berlin for the funeral of the Empress Augusta. In Saxony the modifications which had occupied the Reichstag and the Bundesrath under the heading referred to —that is, the legal restriction of female labor, child labor, and Sunday labor—had already been introduced for some considerable time, and in various industries had been found inconvenient. The Saxon government did not itself wish to reform its own regulations affecting its large industrial population; the interested manufacturers urged upon it their desire that a revision of the arrangements obtaining in Saxony should be effected by imperial legislation, or that the inconvenience of the arrangements should become general for the whole Empire, and therefore for all German competitors; and the King had so far given way to them that the Saxon representatives in the Federal Council became active in connection with the Labor Protection bill; and by degrees all the parties in the Reichstag, in order to win the votes of the electors, or, perhaps, in order not to lose them, expressed themselves by means of resolutions in favor of this legislation. For the bureaucracy of the Federal Council there was a compulsion in the repeated resolutions of the Reichstag, which they, owing to their lack of sympathy with practical life, could not withstand. The members of the committees concerned thought to jeopardize their reputation as the friends of humanity if they did not agree with the humanitarian phrases originating in England. The important Bavarian vote was not

instructed by leaders who were disposed to accept the responsibility for the appearance of anti-humanitarian efforts. I contrived so that the resolutions of the Reichstag were disregarded in the Bundesrath. In these circumstances it was an easy and grateful task for Herr von Boetticher to criticize my opinion in his intercourse with his colleagues in the Bundesrath instead of representing it. My long absence from Berlin placed him in a position to do the same in his dealings with the Kaiser, and, if he had to present reports as my representative, he could point to my self-will as the obstacle in the Kaiser's path to popularity.

It was repugnant to my convictions and my experience so far to encroach upon the independence of the worker, in his professional life and his rights as the head of a family, as to forbid him by law to exploit his own working capacities, and those of his family, according to his own judgment. I do not believe that the workingman is in himself grateful because he is forbidden to earn money on certain days, and during certain hours, as he may choose, even though the question was undoubtedly utilized by the Socialist leaders for the purposes of a successful agitation, with the misrepresentation that the employers were in a position to pay an unreduced wage for the diminished hours of labor. As for the veto upon Sunday labor, I have found by personal inquiry that the workers agreed to it only when they had been assured that the weekly wage would be as large for six days as it had formerly been for seven. The prohibition or limita-

tion of the work of children and adolescents did not commend itself to the parents of those forbidden to work, and among the adolescents it was welcomed only by individuals who followed hazardous ways of making a livelihood. In the present state of railway communications and with a free choice of domicile the opinion that the worker will constantly be compelled by the employer to work at appointed times, even against his will, can be correct only in exceptional instances where the conditions of labor and the state of communications are quite peculiar; but hardly to the extent that an encroachment upon the personal freedom of all the workers would seem to be justified thereby. These questions played no part in connection with the strike.

Be this as it may, it is a fact that the King of Saxony, in spite of all his good will for me, influenced the King's ideas in a direction which was opposed to that which I had advocated for years, particularly in my speech of May 9, 1885, concerning the question of Sunday rest. He had not anticipated that my dismissal from the service would be connected with this point of issue, and he deplored this result. It could hardly have had any connection with it had not the Kaiser's frame of mind been so far influenced, apart from this, by the Grand Duke of Baden and the Ministers Boetticher, Verdy,[1] Herrfurth and others, that His Majesty was convinced that my senile obsti-

[1] Julius von Verdy du Vernois (1832–1910), Prussian officer and military writer; April, 1889, to October, 1890, Minister of War.

nacy was a hindrance to his efforts to win over public opinion and to convert the opponents of the monarchy into adherents.

On the 9th of January the Reichstag reassembled. Even before Christmas, and again soon after, the Kaiser had recommended me, in a fashion that was equivalent to a command, not to come to Berlin for the session. On the morning of the 23d, two days before the session ended, Boetticher telegraphed to me that the Kaiser had informed him through an aide-de-camp that the Crown Council would be held at six o'clock on the following day, and upon my inquiring of him as to the object of the Council, he replied that he did not know. My son, whom I had informed of my correspondence with Boetticher, betook himself to the Kaiser during the afternoon, and in reply to his query as to the purpose of the Council he received the answer that His Majesty wished to lay his opinion concerning the labor question before the Ministry and desired that I should attend the Council. On my son's remarking that he expected me that evening the Kaiser said that I had better not arrive until noon on the following day, so that I should not be settled *en demeure*, nor appear in the Reichstag, where the expression of my opinion, which differed from that of the majority, might endanger the party truce (but this was not said in so many words), and would be incompatible with the intentions of the All-Highest.

I arrived at two o'clock on the afternoon of the 24th. I called a session of the Ministers for three

o'clock. Herr von Boetticher gave no hint that he knew anything certain of the Kaiser's intentions, and the other Ministers merely indulged in conjectures. I moved, and the motion was accepted, that we intended to maintain a provisionally receptive attitude in respect of the imperial revelations, if these should be important, in order that we might thereafter discuss them confidentially among ourselves. The Kaiser had asked me to arrive half an hour earlier than the other Ministers, at half past five, from which I concluded that he wished to discuss the intended communication with me beforehand. Therein I was mistaken; he vouchsafed me no hints as to what was to be discussed, and gave me the impression, when the Council had assembled, that he had a pleasant surprise in store for us. He laid before us two projects, worked out in detail; one in his own hand, the other written to his dictation by an aide-de-camp, both promising to fulfill the Socialist demands. One called for the drafting and completion of a decree of the Kaiser's, expressed in enthusiastic language, and intended for publication, in the spirit of the detailed scheme. The Kaiser had this read by Von Boetticher, who appeared to be familiar with the text. This, to me, was surprising, not so much on account of its businesslike grasp—in this connection I had the impression that there would be no trouble in finding draftsmen who would satisfy the Kaiser—as on account of the practical aimlessness of the scheme, and its pretentious and exalted tone; this could

only weaken the effect of the steps announced, and threatened to allow the whole affair to come to nothing, as a sort of speech of popular felicitation.

Yet more surprising was the monarch's frank written declaration, before his expert constitutional advisers, that this proclamation was based on the information and advice of four men, whom he described as authorities, and mentioned by name. One was Privy Councilor Hinzpeter, an educationalist, who presumptuously and unskillfully exploited the remains of his reputation as a teacher in his relations with his former pupils, carefully avoiding all responsibility; secondly there was Count Douglas, a rich and lucky speculator in mines, who had endeavored to enhance the consideration lent by a great fortune by the luster of an influential position near the sovereign; for this purpose, with ready and appreciative conversational powers, he established political, or perhaps rather politico-economical, relations with the Kaiser, and sought through friendly intercourse with the imperial children to contrive that the Kaiser should make him a count. In the third place there was the painter Von Heyden, a society man, easily persuaded, who, thirty years before, had been a mining official in the office of a Schleswig magnate; to-day he was regarded as an artist in professional mining circles, while in artistic circles he was looked upon as a mining expert. He had, as we were told, based his influence over the Kaiser less upon his own judgment than upon

his relations with an old workingman from Wedding, who served him as a model for beggars and prophets, and from whose conversation he derived material for legislative suggestions which he made in the most exalted quarter.

The fourth authority whom the Kaiser upheld in the presence of his Councilors was Governor von Berlepsch from Coblenz, who had drawn the Kaiser's attention to himself by his friendly attitude to labor during the strike of 1889, and had entered into direct alliance with him, which, as far as I, the superior departmental Minister, was concerned, remained as much a secret as the alliance of Herr von Boetticher in connection with the same question, and that of Herr Herrfurth in connection with local self-government.

After the ensuing reading of the draft His Majesty declared that he had chosen the birthday of the great King for this Crown Council, because the latter would provide a new and highly significant historical point of departure, and he wished the drafting of the decree alluded to in one of the detailed statements to be so expedited that it might be published on his own birthday (the 27th). All the Ministers who spoke declared that the immediate consideration and drafting of such refractory material was impracticable. I warned them what the result would be; the increased expectations and the insatiable covetousness of the Socialist classes would drive the kingdom and the governmental authority on to precipitous courses; His Majesty and the Reichstag were speaking of

the protection of labor, but as a matter of fact it was a question of the compulsion of labor, the compulsion to work less; and whether the deficiency in the income of the head of the family would be forcibly laid to the charge of the employers was questionable, because industries which had lost 14 per cent. of their labor power through the Sunday rest would perhaps be incapable of carrying on, so that finally the workers would lose their livelihood. An imperial decree in the intended spirit would prejudice the coming elections, because it would alarm the propertied classes and would encourage the Socialists. A further burdening of the costs of production would therefore be possible, and could be charged upon the consumers only if the other great industrial states were to proceed in a similar fashion.

His Majesty disputed this opinion, but finally declared that he would agree to the preliminary discussion of his proposals by the Ministry.

The imminent close of the Reichstag session raised the question of a renewal of the Socialist Act, which would otherwise expire in the autumn. In the Commission, in which the National Liberals struck the first blow, the authority to banish was expunged from the proposal of the Bundesrath; consequently the question was raised whether the confederate governments would comply in this particular or whether they would wish to retain the power of banishment because of the danger that the bill might not be passed. To my surprise, and in contravention of my strict instructions to

him, Herr von Boetticher proposed to introduce on the following day, when the last sitting of the Reichstag would take place, an imperial proclamation by which the projected bill would be revised in the sense desired by the National Liberals—that is, the power of banishment would be *voluntarily* renounced—which could not be accomplished in a constitutional manner without the previous consent of the Bundesrath. The Kaiser immediately agreed to the proposal.

There was as yet no question of a definitive resolution of the Reichstag, but only of a second reading of the proposal and the report of the deliberations of the Commission, according to which the unmodified acceptance of the law could not be expected. As I had fought for decades against the tendency of the commissaries and Ministers to alter and weaken the government bills in the course of committee deliberations and under the influence of the lobbies, I declared that in this case the confederate governments would aggravate matters in the future were they already to lower the flag and mutilate their own measures. If they did that, then in the new Reichstag severer measures would become necessary, which would oppose the governmental manifesto that Boetticher had advocated only a few weeks earlier, according to which they, too, would be able to dispense with the banishment clause. I therefore demanded that we should wait for the resolution of the full Assembly; if it submitted an inadequate law this would have to be accepted, but if

now, on account of a refusal, a vacuum were to occur which could not be filled, it would be necessary to wait for the occasion of a more serious infringement, which was finally to be anticipated. We should in any case have to lay a severer measure before the next Reichstag. The Kaiser protested against the experiment with the vacuum; he could not in any case allow matters to come to such a pass, at the beginning of his reign, that there would be a danger of bloodshed; that would never be forgiven him. I replied that whether it came to insurrection and bloodshed depended not on His Majesty and our legislative schemes, but on the revolutionaries, and that bloodshed could hardly be avoided unless we, while confronted by no admitted danger, determined to give way no longer, but to make a stand somewhere. The later the government began to resist the more violent must that resistance be.

The rest of the Ministers, excepting Boetticher and Herrfurth, expressed themselves in agreement with me, some of them giving detailed reasons for their agreement. Here the Kaiser, visibly annoyed by the negative vote of the Ministers, alluded again to capitulating before the Reichstag; whereupon I observed that it was my duty, on the grounds of my special knowledge and experience, to dissuade him from such a course. When I entered official life in 1862 the monarchical power was insecurely situated; the abdication of the King, on the pretext of the impracticable nature of his convictions, had been under discussion.

Since then, for twenty-eight years, the sovereign authority had constantly increased in power and consideration; the voluntary withdrawal in the fight against Social Democracy—which was inspired by Von Boetticher—would be the first step downhill upon the hitherto rising path, in the direction of a temporarily convenient but dangerous parliamentary authority. "If Your Majesty attaches no value to my advice, I do not know whether I can retain my position." To this declaration the Kaiser replied, turning toward Boetticher and away from me, "That puts me in a position of constraint." I myself did not catch these words, but they were repeated to me afterward by those of my colleagues who were sitting to the left of the Kaiser.

Already, on account of the attitude which the Kaiser had adopted in May, 1889, in respect of the miners' strike, I had feared that I should not be able to remain in agreement with him in this sphere of activity. Two days before he received the deputation from the striking miners, on May 14, 1889, he appeared unannounced at the meeting of the Cabinet, and declared that he did not share my views as to the management of the strike. "The employers and shareholders must give way; the workers were his subjects, for whom it was his place to care; if the industrial millionaires would not do as he wished he would withdraw his troops; if the villas of the wealthy mine-owners and directors were then set on fire, and their gardens trampled underfoot, they would soon sing small."

His Majesty failed to grasp my objection that the mine-owners were also subjects who had a claim to the protection of their sovereign, and exclaimed excitedly that if no coal was dispatched our navy would be defenseless; we could not mobilize the army if the movement of troops upon the railways was hindered by lack of coal; that we were now in so precarious a position that if he were Russia he would declare war immediately.

His Majesty's ideal seemed at that time to be popular absolutism. His ancestors had emancipated the peasants and townsfolk. Would a similar emancipation of the workers, at the cost of the employers, follow a course of development to-day analogous to that of the legislative labors of fifty years before, from which proceeded the agricultural and municipal statutes?

The French kings acquired absolutism by playing one rank against another; and from Louis XIV to Louis XVI absolutism was the fundamental law of the state, but it was not a durable basis. Under Friedrich Wilhelm I the King's will was unrestricted; this absolutism, however, was based not on the fickle and changeable foundation of popularity with the mass of the nation, but on the hitherto unshaken monarchical spirit of all ranks, the invincible power of the army and police, and the absence of parliament, press, or rights of association. Friedrich Wilhelm I put any one who opposed him "in the cart" (condemned him to hard labor), or had him hanged (as Schlubuth); and Friedrich II sent the Supreme Court to Span-

dau. To-day the monarchy lacked an *ultima ratio*, and an absolute sovereign authority could not now be based on the acclamation of the masses, even if their material claims were as modest as in the time of Friedrich Wilhelm I. In Denmark, in 1665, the King's decree was law, and remained for a long time valid; but at that time it had to break down only the opposition of a small minority, that of the nobility, not the economic life of the industrial and professional classes.

The strikers were naturally encouraged to increase their demands by the belief that the attitude of the highest authority in the state was favorable to them. This is why the factions of our Reichstag were unanimous in fawning upon the enfranchised workers in connection with the pretended labor-protection laws. I regarded the latter as irremediably prejudicial and a source of future discontent, but I did not think them so important that the Kaiser would in 1887 make a Cabinet question of them.

The reasons why my political conscience was not in favor of my resignation lay in another direction—namely, in that of foreign affairs—from the standpoint of the Empire as well as that of the German policy of Prussia. I could not transfer to another the confidence and authority which I had acquired, during a long period of service, both abroad and at the German court. On my retirement this possession would be lost to the nation and the dynasty. During sleepless nights I had time enough to weigh this question in my con-

science, and came to the conclusion that it was a point of honor for me to endure to the end, and that I could not take the responsibility and initiative for my resignation upon myself, but must leave it to the Kaiser. But I did not wish to make matters more difficult for him, and determined, after the Privy Council of the 24th of January, to retire voluntarily from the Ministry, from a department of which those convictions which had proved irreconcilable with the Kaiser's had for years been officially announced—that is, from the Board of Trade, to whose official competence the labor question belonged.

I regarded it as possible to allow developments in this department to pass over me with a *tolerari posse*, giving a sort of passive assistance, while continuing to control the really political—that is, the foreign—business of the department. It was obvious beforehand that the handling of the labor problem would be a difficult task for a prudent and honorable servant of the nation and the monarchy, in the face of the Kaiser's belief that his good will would suffice to appease the covetousness of the workers, and to win their gratitude and allegiance. I considered it right and just that Herr von Berlepsch, who, as president of a government board, without the knowledge of the responsible Minister of Commerce, had in 1889, for the sake of higher inducements, begun actively to oppose my ideas, should assume ministerial responsibility for the course in which he had confirmed the Kaiser by his co-operation. Thereby at the same time

the Kaiser would be placed in a position to put the practicability of his benevolent intentions to the proof, of his own initiative and without being misled by me.

I called a session of the Ministry and expressed my opinion, which obtained the unanimous assent of the Ministers; and as the result of a petition which was immediately presented Herr von Berlepsch was appointed Minister of Commerce on January 31, 1890. I may add in connection with this experiment that by reason of the independence which Governor von Berlepsch had displayed as an unofficial adviser of His Majesty's, I had estimated his energy, his interest in the matter, and his qualifications for it at a higher rate than his ministerial record justified. The Kaiser prefers men of the second class as Ministers, and the resulting situation is incorrect, inasmuch as the Ministers do not provide His Majesty with advice and encouragement, but expect, and receive, both from him.

CHAPTER VI

THE IMPERIAL DECREE OF FEBRUARY 4, 1890

During the ministerial session of the 26th of January I expounded again the danger of the intended imperial decree, but was met with the objection from Boetticher and Verdy that an adverse vote would displease the Kaiser. My colleagues had performed a *sacrificium intellectus* to the Kaiser; my representative and *ad latus* had behaved dishonestly toward me. In vain did I go to the length of describing it as a commission of high treason when responsible Ministers found their sovereign pursuing a path which they regarded as dangerous to the state, and did not candidly tell him as much, but reversed the constitutional position by a Cabinet advised by the Kaiser. My suggestion was opposed by Boetticher, with the approval of the Minister of War, by the simple repetition of the phrase, that we really must contrive something in accordance with His Majesty's wishes. As the other Ministers refrained from joining in the discussion between Boetticher and myself, I was obliged to abandon the hope of opposing His Majesty's encouragement of the workers, which, according to my conviction, was dangerous to the state, by a unanimous vote.

I had anticipated that the Cabinet would assume the same attitude as when the Kaiser's grandfather, through feminine, Masonic, or other influences, had been persuaded to injurious courses. In such cases it was necessary to aim at establishing the unanimous agreement of the Ministers, even though violent differences of opinion had existed among them previously; and the aged sovereign used to give way if he could win no votes for himself. I remember only one exception. After the Frankfort Treaty of Peace of May 10, 1871, had been accepted by the French National Assembly it was possible to withdraw our troops, which until then had been employed in garrisoning a sufficient area of the occupied departments as guaranty. The Ministers were unanimous that this should be done forthwith. All troops that were not obliged to remain with the colors were to be discharged, and the return to Berlin of the regiments forming part of the garrison was to be fixed for the earliest possible date, and in any case was not to be later than May. But here we encountered an obstinate opposition on the part of His Majesty. The Kaiserin Augusta, as I had learned, desired to be present at the entry of the troops, but wished to finish her cure in Baden-Baden first; the Kaiser wished his wife's desire to be fulfilled, but he also wished to see the regiments march past in full war strength. In vain did we deliberate for days on end, meeting on the ground floor of the palace. In vain did we urge the expense, and consideration for those men who had so long been

separated from their families and businesses, and the urgent need of returning so many workers to the fields. The Kaiser, who did not wish to enter into the real reasons for his opposition to the advice of his Ministers, found it difficult to meet our arguments, but remained firm on this point, that the entry of the troops must take place in the middle of June, and that they must be in full war strength. During our deliberations it happened that someone was walking to and fro in the room over the Council Chamber with such a heavy tread that the chandeliers broke into a jingling movement. After the last fruitless deliberation Lauer, physician in ordinary to the Kaiser, sought me out in order to inform me that he feared the most dangerous results for His Majesty's health, possibly an apoplexy, if domestic peace were not restored. On receiving this information the Cabinet yielded; the troops did not enter the city until the 16th of June, when they marched past beneath His Majesty's eyes.

In the case which now engaged the attention of the Cabinet I had considered by what other factors the Kaiser might perhaps be influenced. Such appeared to be the Council of State, the Politico-Economical Council, from which I might expect a spirit of reaction against the immediately imminent elections to the Reichstag, and the foreign governments, which might look for the same sort of mischief, as a result of the partizan interference of the Kaiser, as I feared would occur at home. My proposal to convene the Council of

State and an international Conference, which I made at the same sitting (on the 26th), in order to provide, by the deliberations of competent authorities, a counterpoise to the work of irresponsible and ignorant amateurs, met with approval.

The drafting of the corresponding decree I myself took in hand. The so-called camarilla had been of opinion that a proclamation such as the Kaiser desired would have a favorable influence on the Reichstag elections. I was convinced of the contrary, of course without foreseeing how far the falling off of the votes on the 20th of February was to justify my opinion. As the result of experience I held that as a matter of tactics it was dangerous, in a situation such as the strike of the previous year had prepared, to make allusion to measures of indefinite and incalculable scope in a promissory form. I was convinced that the untruthfulness and misrepresentation of election speeches would never give prime consideration to any real purpose of the government, but always to the pretense and misrepresentation intended to arouse criticism of the existing state of things. Proclamations of a decisive character issued before the elections might have a favorable effect upon the latter if they referred to unequivocal matters of fact, which afford no grounds for misrepresentation—for example, of foreign aggression or menace, or of attempts at assassination like that of Nobiling.[1] For a proclamation such as that intended I

[1] On June 2, 1878.

feared not exactly direct and immediate criticism, if it were really and correctly understood, so much as its skillful exploitation by agitators hostile to the government. On this account I was not without anxiety as to the effect of the decree which the Kaiser wished to issue, but thought it all the more important to advise him. In accordance with the conviction which had guided me for forty years in Prussian and German politics I regarded it as my duty to warn the Kaiser against impressions or actions which would lead rather to a retrograde movement of that reinforcement of the sovereign power and strengthening of the Empire at which I had been working, with success, since 1862, than to the winning of momentary election results.

In the course of forty years I had seen many popular representatives come and go, and I regarded them as less injurious to our general development than monarchical blunders might be, if they were not presented for discussion, since in 1858 the Prince Regent had entered upon the path of the "new era."[1] Even in those days it was the honest desire of the sovereign to benefit his subjects, who, in his opinion, had been taken away from him merely out of mistaken zeal and unrighteous lust for power. Even in those days it happened that a coterie of ambitious place hunters, who had achieved nothing during the Manteuffel era, the Bethmann-Hollweg[2] party, had formed itself about

[1] The Hohenzollern-Auerswald Ministry, November, 1858, to March, 1862.

[2] Moritz August Bethmann-Hollweg (1795-1877), Prussian jurist, university professor and politician; Minister of Public Worship in the "new era."

the heir to the throne, and had exploited the disparity between his lofty intentions and his deficient knowledge of practical life, in order to set him against his brother's government, and to make him seem its opponent, as the representative of the rights of man.

In order to appease the Kaiser's impatience to some extent, I gave the two drafts in question (for the Imperial Chancellor and the Ministry of Commerce) a style corresponding to his character and his desire for emphatic expression. On presenting them I declared that I had prepared them only in obedience to his command, and urgently begged him to refrain from publications of the kind, to wait for the moment when properly formulated and detailed proposals could be laid before the Reichstag, or at all events to allow the elections to go by before the labor problem was touched upon. The indefinite and universal character of the imperial proposals would arouse expectations which it would be impossible to satisfy, and their nonfulfillment would increase the difficulty of the situation. I wanted to be able to remember, when after months or weeks His Majesty should himself come to recognize the danger and prejudice which I feared, that I had advised him against the whole proceeding in the most positive manner, and that I had supplied the completed text only out of the dutiful obedience of an official who is still serving. I concluded with the request that the drafts which had been read aloud might be thrown into the fire then burning in the grate. The Kaiser

replied, "No, no, give them to me!" and with some haste signed both proclamations, which were published, without counter-signatures, in the *Reichs- und Staats-Anzeiger* of the 9th of February:

I am resolved, for the betterment of the situation of the German workers, so far as the limits which of necessity restrict my provisions will allow, to assist in maintaining German industry in a condition capable of competing in the world market, thereby assuring its and the workers' existence. The retrogression of our home trades through the loss of their foreign markets would leave not only the employers, but also their workers, without a livelihood. The difficulties in the way of improving the situation of our workers, which are based on international competition, can be, if not overcome, then diminished, only by an international agreement with the countries which share the mastery of the world market. Convinced that other governments also are inspired by the desire to submit to a joint examination the endeavors of the workers of these countries to carry on international negotiations among themselves, I desire that in France, England, Belgium, and Switzerland official inquiries shall first be made by my representatives there as to whether the governments are disposed to enter into negotiations with us in respect of an international agreement relating to the possibility of meeting those needs and wishes of the workers which were revealed during the strikes of the last year and at other times. Directly assent is obtained for the essential points of my proposal, I commission you to invite the Cabinets of all the governments which take a similar interest in the labor question to a conference for the purpose of deliberating over the problems referred to.

To the Imperial Chancellor.

WILHELM, I.R.

. . . . . .

On my accession to power I announced my resolve to promote the further development of our legislation in the same

direction as that adopted by my grandfather, now resting in God, in his care for the economically weaker portion of the nation, in the spirit of Christian morality. Valuable and pregnant in results as the legislative and administrative measures hitherto taken for the improvement of the condition of the working class have been, yet they do not fulfill the whole of the task which is before me. In connection with the further completion of the labor protection legislation, the existing prescriptions of the trade regulations concerning the conditions of the factory workers will be subjected to an examination, as to whether the wishes and complaints which have been loudly heard in this connection are proved to be justified. This examination will be undertaken on the principle that it is one of the duties of the executive power so to regulate the time, the duration, and the character of labor that the preservation of health, the injunctions of morality, and the economic needs of the workers, and their claim to equality of legal rights, shall be protected. For the furtherance of peace between employers and employed, the legal determination will be considered of the manner in which the workers, through representatives who possess their confidence, may share in the settlement of joint affairs, and be authorized to protect their interests by negotiation with the employers and the organs of my government. Through such an arrangement the free and peaceful expression of the workers' desires and grievances will be made possible, and the governmental authorities will be given an opportunity of informing themselves uninterruptedly of the conditions of the workers, and to keep in touch with them. The government mines I wish to be developed, as regards the precautions taken in respect of the workers, into model training schools, and in the case of private mines I am endeavoring to realize the establishment of an organic relation with my mining officials, for the purpose of establishing a supervision corresponding to the factory inspection, as it existed up to the year 1865. For the preliminary consideration of these questions I intend to

summon the State Council under my presidency, to be assisted by experts whom I shall call together for the purpose. The selection of these latter I reserve to myself. Among the difficulties which confront the regulation of the conditions of labor in the direction which I have in view those which arise from the necessity of protecting our home industries in their competition with foreign countries occupy a predominant position. I have therefore instructed the Imperial Chancellor to suggest to the governments of those states whose industries, together with ours, govern the world market, the convening of a conference, in order to advocate the introduction of the uniform international control of frontiers, in the place of demands which might be based on the activities of the workers. The Imperial Chancellor will communicate to you the transcript of the manifesto which I have addressed to him.

WILHELM R.

To the Minister of Public Works and for Trade and Industry.

Although I could not, as I saw, cut at the root of His Majesty's personal intentions, yet I was gratified to receive his consent—*subrepticie*, it is true—to the *rapprochement* of the State Council and the neighboring governments. But I had deceived myself in counting on these factors.

While I had believed in the compelling power of material interests in the State Council and the international conference, I had overestimated the independence and the moral earnestness of the people. In the State Council the servile element was strengthened by the convening of a number of hitherto unknown persons, who had been gathered partly from the working class and partly from the Berlin manufacturers, and who delivered speeches

which they had certainly often delivered before. A propagandist chaplain was also present. All the officials were silent and expectant. Baare, a foundry-owner, and Jencke, a confidential man of Krupp's from Essen, the only persons who ventured discreetly to criticize the Kaiser's intentions, were overawed by the remembrance of partly spoken, partly fabricated sayings of the Kaiser, in the shape of threats against the employers, and by the fear of estranging the Kaiser still further, and thereby evoking yet further threats against the proprietors and employers. The courteous timidity of the representatives of prudence, compared with the boldness of the practiced popular speakers whom the Kaiser had called in, made it evident that we could not anticipate that the sittings of the State Council would affect His Majesty impartially. The Kaiser had decided that the sittings should take place in the offices of Herr von Boetticher, on whom the selection and invitation of the persons representing the working class also devolved. As vice-president of the State Council I attended the first four hours' sitting of my own accord without taking part in the discussion. When the Kaiser wished to put the question presumably formulated by Von Boetticher to the vote, I found myself alone, with Baare and Jencke, among forty or fifty persons. As in my ministerial position I did not wish to set myself in manifest opposition to the Kaiser, I declared, as the reason for my abstention, that the active Ministers of State in particular were not in

a position to vote in the State Council and thereby prejudice their vote in the Cabinet. The Kaiser commanded that my observation should be officially recorded. I kept away from the following sittings of the State Council, after I had ascertained, in private conversation with the Kaiser, that I was thereby fulfilling his desire.

The International Conference also, which was opened on the 15th of March, and by the mention of which I am only slightly anticipating events, failed to respond to my expectations. I had proposed that it should be convened because I assumed that His Majesty's belief in the utility, justice, and popularity of his efforts had been so fortified by the four intellectual originators of the same that his willingness to listen to yet other experts was only to be counted upon if the deliberations took place in the splendor of a European conference summoned by him and a public discussion in the State Council.

In this connection I had counted upon a more honest examination of the German proposals, at least on the part of the French and English, because in the case of our western competitors I had not properly weighed against one another the tendencies which would presumably be operative. I credited them with more sense of honor and humanity than existed: I assumed that they would either take a practical point of view, and decline the Utopian part of the Kaiser's suggestions, or would consent to the demand for regulations of a similar nature in the countries concerned, so that

the workers would be uniformly better treated and the costs of production increased uniformly. The first alternative was, to my thinking, on account of the difficulties of execution and control involved by the second, the probable one. But I had not calculated that our representatives would have fallen so completely under the charm of Jules Simon's phrases that not once was an argument of service to the Kaiser triumphant; we only acquired the certainty that the neighbor states did not envy us our illusions. They took good care to guard against hindering the German legislation, if it was about to cause inconvenience to the home industries and the workers of Germany. They regulated their behavior by the same rule of conduct which all the elements that I have fought for decades as enemies of the Empire are acting up to to-day; it was not their business to check the imperial government on the path of self-injury.

CHAPTER VII

CHANGES

From his behavior to me, and from communications made to me later, I can only draw more or less accurate conclusions as to the changes of mood and opinion that occurred in the Kaiser during the last weeks before my dismissal. Of the psychological changes in myself alone I can give some account, thanks to contemporary notes made from day to day. Each of us, of course, exerted a reciprocal influence, but it is not practicable to represent synoptically the parallel events which occurred on both sides. In my old age I did not cling to my position—only to my duty. The ever-increasing signs that the Kaiser—who was allowed to believe (by Boetticher, Berlepsch, etc.) that I was an obstacle to his popularity with the workers—had more confidence in Boetticher, Verdy, my councilors, Berlepsch, and other unofficial advisers than in me, made me consider whether and how far my complete or partial withdrawal without prejudice to the interests of the state might be advisable. Without any ill feeling, on many a sleepless night I considered the question whether I could and should extricate myself from the difficulties which I foresaw as imminent. I always

came to the conclusion that I should be conscious of a feeling of disloyalty if I refused the conflict which I foresaw. I found the Kaiser's disinclination to share the glory of his coming years of rule understandable from a psychological point of view, and, any sensitiveness apart, he was clearly within his rights. The idea of being free of all responsibility, in view of my opinion of the Kaiser and his aims, was to me extremely seductive; but my sense of honor showed me this aversion from conflict and work in the service of the Fatherland as incompatible with a courageous sense of duty. I feared at that time that the crises which, as I believed, were before us would be upon us quickly. I did not foresee that their advent would be postponed by the abandonment of all anti-Socialist legislation through concessions to the different classes hostile to the Empire. I was and am of opinion that the later they occur the more dangerous they will be. I regarded the Kaiser as longing for conflict, as he was, or remained while under alien influence, and I held it my duty to remain beside him, as a moderating influence, or eventually opposing him.

In the second week of February, when my impression was confirmed that the Kaiser wished to develop at least the Socialist affair, in the belief that he could conduct it in a propitiatory manner, without me, and more indulgently than I thought advisable, I resolved to have the matter plainly understood, and said, in a speech, on the 8th of February, "I fear that I am in Your Majesty's

way." The Kaiser was silent, signifying his assent. I thereupon amiably unfolded the possibility that in case I were first of all to resign my Prussian offices, retaining only that for which I had been recommended by my opponents more than ten years previously, that of the "old fellow at the Foreign Office," I might still continue to make the capital of experience and confidence which I had won for myself in Germany and abroad useful to the Kaiser and the Empire. His Majesty nodded in agreement with this part of my statement, and finally asked, in a vivacious tone, "But I suppose you will still move the military requisitions in the Reichstag?" I replied, without knowing their extent, that I would willingly support them. To me the Socialist question was at first more important than the military question, and I considered that we were strong enough in artillery and superior officers. Verdy had been appointed without me; since 1870 our relations had been bad, and I regarded him as a spy in the Kaiser's Cabinet Council. His appointment was a move of the Kaiser's against me, and I did not regard it as my duty to take the lead in opposing the far-reaching plans which in the Kaiser's name and Verdy's were brought forward as "infallible." The sum of 117 millions was a challenge first to the Minister of Finance and then to the confederate states and the Reichstag. To me the Socialist problem was, as a running fight, more urgent than Verdy's proposition; and it was so.

I offered without more ado to postpone my

resignation from the Prussian administration, if His Majesty so desired, until the day of the elections (20th of February), so that it should neither seem a result of the elections nor yet affect them; for I considered that they were already imperiled by the Kaiser's manifestoes. I recommended, in my program, that in any case a general officer should be selected as my successor in the Prussian service, because I feared that in possible conflicts with the Socialist movement, and in the event of repeated dissolutions of the Reichstag, the Liberal Ministers would be reluctant to represent the Kaiser, somewhat as Bodelschwingh[1] and others, who at least were not wanting in personal courage, had in 1848 so dealt with the King that reactionary methods were impossible. The most important departments in such a case, as I told His Majesty, were those of the Police, War, and Justice. The police were in the hands of the Minister of the Interior, Herrfurth, a Liberal bureaucrat. The Ministry of War, on which was founded the King's power of resistance and final victory in 1848, was likewise in Liberal hands; the political ideals of Herr von Verdy would hardly coincide with those of the majority of his predecessors. The attitude of the Attorney General depended on that of the Minister of Justice,[2] and Herr von Schelling was a distinguished jurist, conservatively inclined, but decrepit, and not the man for self-sacrificing

[1] Ernst von Bodelschwingh (1794–1854); from 1842 to 1848 Prussian Minister; finally Minister of the Interior.

[2] Hermann von Schelling (1824–1908), a son of the philosopher; 1889–94 Prussian Minister of Justice.

action in a difficult situation. Boetticher, too, was no hero, but was regarded as a flabby character. Only a military chief could in case of need conceal the civilian weakness of the government. I mentioned Caprivi as a suitable general; true, he was strange to politics, but was a soldier on whom the King might rely. In political life he could, in quiet times, be substantially held in check as a President of Council without a department. There was no talk at that time of the possibility of making Caprivi my successor in the Foreign Office. The Kaiser consented to the idea that I should retire from the Prussian service, and at the mention of Caprivi's name I thought I read in his face an expression of gratified surprise. He seemed already to have been His Majesty's candidate. I could thereafter conjecture that the summoning of the general from Hanover to Berlin shortly after the Crown Council of the 24th of January had another motive than that of military discussions. It seemed to me worth noting that Caprivi was also Windthorst's candidate. Relations had existed between Caprivi and the Center *via* Gebbin since the time of the *Kulturkampf*.

In the ministerial session of the 9th of February I intimated my intention of resigning from the Prussian administration. My colleagues were silent, the expressions on their faces were various, only Boetticher spoke a few unimportant words, but he asked me, after the sitting, whether as president of Council he would take precedence at court before old General von Pape. I said to my

son, "At the idea of being rid of me they all said, '*Ouf!*' relieved and gratified!"

The Kaiser's desire that I should bring forward the heavy military requisition which he was then contemplating caused me to undertake a repeated examination of the conditions as they would be if I were to withdraw from my Prussian offices as early as the 20th of February. I had to consider that the introduction of Verdy's proposal, and others of a less far-reaching nature, would be of little importance, and have little prospect of success if at the time I no longer appeared to enjoy the Kaiser's confidence in the same measure as heretofore, and could no longer come forward as the leader of Prussian politics in the Federal Council, but had to carry out the instructions of my Prussian colleagues and successors. Following up these arguments, I accordingly recommended, in a report to the Kaiser, on the 12th of February, that the decision relating to my retirement should not take effect on the 20th of February, but should be postponed until after the first divisions had been lost, or won, in the new Reichstag, in respect of the military requisition and the renewal of the Socialist law, preferably until May or June. His Majesty, who was, it seemed to me, unpleasantly affected by my statement, said, "Then everything will stay with the old man for a time." I replied: "As your Majesty commands. I am afraid of bad elections, and it will need all the authority that has existed hitherto in order to influence the Reichstag; my earlier

importance in the Reichstag is apart from that diminished by the already known diminution of Your Majesty's confidence in me."

Although I was fully convinced that the Kaiser wished to be rid of me, yet my attachment to the throne and my doubts as to the future made it seem cowardly to desist before I had exhausted all means that might guard the monarchy from danger or defend it. After it was possible to survey the result of the elections, I developed a program, in a proposal made on the 23d of February, in the conviction that His Majesty wished to pursue the policy, which for years previously had been known as contrary to my own, in view of the new electoral situation. On account of the composition of the Reichstag, and in order to advocate the Socialist policy hitherto followed, as well as the military requisitions, I now held that it was all the more necessary for me to remain until after the first parliamentary conflicts, so that I might help to insure our future against the Socialist peril. His Majesty, in consequence of the policy observed in connection with the strike and the manifesto of the 4th of February, would be obliged to fight against Social Democracy earlier than would otherwise have been the case. If he wished to do this I would willingly lead the battle, but should indulgence be the order of the day I foresaw greater perils; and these would only be increased by the postponement of the crisis. The Kaiser understood the situation, cast aside his policy of indulgence, and accepted, or so it seemed to me

when he gave me his hand at parting, my watchword of "No surrender!"

On the following day he expressed himself, before his circle of acquaintances, who were gratified by the remark, in these words, "He only wants me still to go on giving the impression that *he* is governing alone, and that all measures proceed from *him*, and so on."

In the belief that I had the Kaiser's consent to my program, and that I should retain my offices perhaps until June, I declared, at the Cabinet meeting of the 2d of March, that His Majesty was determined to accept the situation and to fight. The Ministry would eventually have to be reconstructed to that end; I would at the proper time place my portfolio at His Majesty's disposal, and in accordance with his last statements I should be charged with the formation of a homogeneous Ministry prepared to fight against the social revolution. The impression made by these opening remarks was not pleasing to all my colleagues; the expression "homogeneous" was understood in the sense that an aggressive attack upon Socialism would demand attributes of character which not all of them possessed.

On the 8th of March I had reason to consider whether the Kaiser's attitude at the close of the conversation of the 25th of February was to be explained by a momentary excitement which had since then subsided, or whether perhaps it was not intended seriously. On the occasion of a con-

versation relating to other subjects, His Majesty recommended me to be friendly with Boetticher. I replied with an illustration of his insubordination and deceitfulness toward me, calling particular attention to the facts that legally he was my subordinate in the Empire, and had his seat in the Cabinet only as my *ad latus*, yet in the Reichstag, particularly in social matters and questions of Sunday labor, he enlisted and influenced members against me; and that on the afternoon of the 20th of January he had summoned the Federal Council and, entering into the proposals originating in the Reichstag, had put a motion for the improvement of the salaries of administrative officials, and then, in the name of the federated governments, had made a corresponding statement in the Reichstag, in direct contradiction to my written instructions, which I had given him on the morning of the same day. I had scarcely left the palace when the Kaiser sent Herr von Boetticher, with a very gracious letter, the Order of the Black Eagle. I, as superior of the persons thus decorated, was not informed of this, and I received no subsequent communication on the subject.

In spite of the demonstration which was thus directed against me I did not receive the impression, in a conversation which took place on the 10th, that the Kaiser had abandoned my program. His Majesty declared that he wished to insist upon the larger military requisition, which the Minister of War, Von Verdy, at the Cabinet

meeting of the previous day, had emphatically stated *must not be refused;* the Scharnhorst-Boyen idea of training every man capable of bearing arms had been abandoned by us, but adopted by the French as the ideal of the "nation in arms." In spite of a population eleven millions less than ours they would before long be superior to us, with seven hundred and fifty thousand fully trained troops. In the Cabinet meeting of the 12th of March the same matter was discussed, and it appeared that the permanent increase of expenditure for the realization of Verdy's plans would amount to something over one hundred million marks yearly.[1] To the question whether with this extraordinary Reichstag it would not be possible to be content with those things that were most urgent, rather than expose the necessary artillery projects, which would certainly have been accepted, to the postponement of a dissolution which might follow the demand for the whole requisition, Verdy replied that the whole must be accepted without delay. I demanded that the heads of the Finance Department should put the matter to the vote; Scholz and Maltzahn would then be prepared to negotiate the matter financially. A future sum of one hundred millions would have been added to the army budget and would have to be gradually realized during the next ten years.

While I was thus working for the realization of the imperial program the Kaiser himself, I am

[1] $25,000,000. (*Trans.*)

forced to believe, had given it up, without giving me any hint of it. I shall not attempt to decide whether he had been particularly in earnest over it. I was informed later that the Grand Duke of Baden, advised by Herr von Marschall, had in those days warned the Kaiser against a policy which might lead to bloodshed; if it came to a conflict "the old Chancellor would be in the foreground again."

In the then aspect of the military question I saw no reason for a breach with the Reichstag; I supported it partly from conviction (as regards artillery, officers, and noncommissioned officers) and partly because I held it to be the duty of others (the Finance Department and the Reichstag) to oppose the Kaiser and his Verdy in *this* matter.

Whether such influences were required at all I do not know. The grand duke came to Berlin a few days before the 9th of March, the anniversary of Wilhelm I's death, and according to my observations the Kaiser's resolution to allow the plan of campaign to drop dated from the period between the 8th and the 14th of March. I suppose it was repugnant to him to extricate himself openly in my presence, and instead of this, to my regret, the method was chosen of allowing me to remain in office until the June term. The usual methods of business intercourse, with which I had until then been favored, underwent a decisive alteration during these days, so that I am obliged to conclude that the Kaiser not only regarded my services as unnecessary, but also as unwelcome; and that

His Majesty, instead of telling me this in a friendly manner, with his former candor, urged my retirement by ungracious methods. Hitherto I personally had felt no ill humor. I was honestly ready to help the Kaiser to shape affairs as he desired. This mental condition of mine was first disturbed by the steps taken on the 15th, 16th, and 17th, which exempted me from any personal responsibility for my resignation from service and necessitated my breaking up a household which had existed for a lifetime at a day's notice; yet to this day I have not with absolute certainty learned the actual reason of the rupture.

CHAPTER VIII

MY DISMISSAL

On the morning of the 14th of March I inquired whether I should attend for the presentation of my report on that or the following day, but I received no answer. My intention was to inform the Kaiser of a conversation which I had had with Windthorst on the 12th, and of certain communications which had reached me from Russia. On the morning of the 15th, at nine o'clock, I was awakened with the news that His Majesty had just had it announced that I should make a speech in the "Foreign Office" at nine-thirty, by which was meant, in accordance with the usual custom, my son's official residence. There we received the Kaiser. To my remark that I had almost been too late, since I had been awakened only twenty-five minutes earlier by His Majesty's command, the Kaiser replied: "So? I gave the order yesterday afternoon." Later it came out that he had first settled the time for the report after ten o'clock at night, and that there was as a rule no egress from the palace in the evening. I began my report: "I am able to inform Your Majesty that Windthorst has come out of his burrow and has sought me out." The Kaiser thereupon cried

out, "Well, of course you had him thrown out-of-doors." I replied, while my son left the room, that I had naturally received Windthorst, since I had always been accustomed, as Minister, to receive any member of parliament whose manners did not make him impossible, and since I was in duty bound to do so when any such member presented himself. The Kaiser declared that I should first have inquired of him. I differed from him, indicating my liberty to receive visits in my own house, particularly such as it was my official duty to receive, or such as I had a reason for receiving. The Kaiser insisted on his pretensions, adding that he knew that Windthorst's visit had been arranged through the banker, Von Bleichröder; "Jews and Jesuits" always held together. I replied that I was greatly honored that His Majesty should be so exactly informed concerning the private occurrences in my house; it was correct that Windthorst had sought for Bleichröder's mediation, probably owing to some sort of scheme of his, for he knew that every deputy had access to me at any time. But the choice of an intermediary was Windthorst's, not mine, and did not concern me. In connection with the constellation in the new Reichstag, it was a matter of great importance that I should know the plan of campaign of the leader of the strongest faction, and I was pleased to hear that he unexpectedly wished me to receive him. I had discovered, in the course of this conversation, that Windthorst intended to make impossible demands (*status quo*

ante 1870). To ascertain his intentions had for me been a professional necessity. If His Majesty wished to reproach me in respect of this motive, it was just as if His Majesty were to forbid his General Staff, in time of war, to reconnoiter the enemy. I could not submit to such control over private matters and my personal movements in my own house. But the Kaiser peremptorily demanded, "Not even when your sovereign commands it?" I persisted in my refusal.

The Kaiser asked me nothing as to Windthorst's plans, but began: "I receive scarcely any reports now from my Ministers; I have been told that you have forbidden them to give me reports except with your consent or in your presence, and that you are relying on an old yellow order that was completely forgotten."

I explained that this was not the case at all. This order of September, 1852, which had been in force as long as our Constitution had existed, was indispensable to every Prime Minister; it required only that he should be informed in the case of important proposals, which were new in principle, before the Kaiser's decision was obtained, for otherwise he could not shoulder the collective responsibility; if there was to be a Prime Minister, the substance of this order must be authoritative. The Kaiser asserted that the order in question limited his royal prerogative, and demanded its revocation. I called attention to the fact that His Majesty's three predecessors had governed the country under this order; since 1862 there

had been no question raised in respect of it, for it had always been observed as a matter of course. I had lately been obliged to remind certain persons of its existence, in order to maintain my authority over certain Ministers who had failed to observe it. The Ministers' proposals were not restricted by the order; it merely stipulated that notice should be given to the Prime Minister when *new* proposals of a general nature were put before His Majesty, so that the former, in such cases as seemed to him of importance, should be in a position to express his possible disapproval in the joint reports. The King could then always decide according to his own opinion; under Friedrich Wilhelm IV[1] it had more than once happened that the King had decided against the Premier.

I then turned the conversation upon the dispatches which had come to hand concerning the visit to Russia, which His Majesty had announced for the summer. I again sought to dissuade him, and in support of my arguments I mentioned certain secret reports from St. Petersburg, which Count Hatzfeldt had forwarded from London; they contained unfavorable expressions which the Tsar was said to have employed concerning His Majesty and the last visit which His Majesty had paid him. The Kaiser demanded that I should read him a report of the kind which I was holding in my hand. I explained that I could not bring myself to do that, because the verbal contents

[1] Friedrich Wilhelm IV, born 1795; King of Prussia June 7, 1840; died 1861.

"THE KAISER SNATCHED THE PAPER FROM MY HAND, READ IT, AND APPEARED TO BE JUSTLY WOUNDED BY THE WORDING OF THE TSAR'S SUPPOSED REMARKS."

would wound his feelings. The Kaiser took the paper from my hand, read it, and appeared to be justly wounded by the wording of the Tsar's supposed remarks.

The remarks which, according to hearsay evidence, were attributed to the Emperor Alexander, concerning the impression which his cousin had made upon him at the time of his last visit to St. Petersburg, were indeed so unpleasing that I had had some misgivings as to calling His Majesty's attention to these reports at all. Apart from this I had no assurance that Count Hatzfeldt's statements, or his sources of information, were authentic. The falsifications which were conveyed to the Emperor Alexander from Paris in 1887, and which I had successfully checkmated, now made me think it possible that certain persons were trying, by similar methods, but from the other side, to influence our sovereign, in order to turn him against his Russian relatives, and to make him inimical to Russia in the matter of the Anglo-Russian controversy, and directly or indirectly the confederate of England. We are, it is true, no longer living in the days when the insulting sallies of Frederick the Great made the Empress Elizabeth and Madame de Pompadour, and therefore France, the enemies of Prussia. Still, I could not bring myself to read or to communicate the expressions which were ascribed to the Tsar to my own sovereign. But, on the other hand, I had to consider that the Kaiser, as the result of experience, was actuated by suspicion, as though

I had held back important dispatches, and that his inquiries as to whether I was doing so would not be confined to direct inquiries addressed to myself. The Kaiser had not always as much confidence in his Ministers as in their subordinates, and Count Hatzfeldt, as a useful and efficient diplomatist, enjoyed, in the circumstances, more confidence than his predecessor. It was also easy for him, when meeting the Kaiser in Berlin or London, to question His Majesty as to what sort of impression these extraordinary and significant announcements had produced upon him; and if it then proved that I had placed them, without using them, among the state papers—as I should have preferred to do—then the Kaiser would have reproached me, in word or thought, for concealing dispatches from him in the interest of Russia, as was the case a day later in connection with the military reports of a certain consul. Apart from this my desire to dissuade the Kaiser from the second visit to St. Petersburg carried some weight against the complete silence of Hatzfeldt's communication. I had hoped that the Kaiser would have listened to my decided refusal to inform him of the tenor of Hatzfeldt's report, as his father and grandfather would undoubtedly have done, and I had on this account confined myself to paraphrasing these passages, with the intimation that it followed therefrom that the Kaiser's visit was not welcome to the Tsar; that he would rather that it should not take place. The wording of the document whose perusal the Kaiser insisted

upon, literally with his own hands, was undoubtedly extremely displeasing to him, and was intended to be so.

He rose, and offered me his hand—in which he was holding his helmet—more coldly than usual. I accompanied him to the outer steps before the door of the house. He was just about to step into the carriage before the eyes of the servants when he sprang up the steps again and shook my hand vigorously.

While already the Kaiser's whole attitude toward me could only produce the impression that he wanted to disgust me with the service and increase my ill humor to the point of seeking to resign, yet I believe that his fully justified irritation concerning the affronts which Count Hatzfeldt, no matter from what motives, had transmitted, had for the moment encouraged the Kaiser in his tactics against me. Even if the change in the Kaiser's methods, and in his consideration for me, had not been intended, as I had incidentally supposed, to determine how long my nerves would hold out, it was nevertheless quite in the monarchical tradition that the bearer should be the first to suffer for the insult which might be contained in a message for the King. History ancient and modern contains examples of messengers who were sacrificed to the royal anger on account of the contents of messages of which they were not the authors.

In the course of our conversation the Kaiser declared quite positively that he wished in any

case to avoid a dissolution of the Reichstag, and, on this account, to reduce the military requisition to a sum which would be sure to obtain a majority. My audience and my conversation left me with the subsequent impression that the Kaiser wanted to be rid of me, that he had altered his intention of going through the first negotiations with the new Reichstag with me, and did not wish to come to a decision regarding our separation until the beginning of the summer, after it had become clear whether it would or would not be necessary to dissolve the new Reichstag. I suppose the Kaiser did not wish to go back upon his quasi-agreement of the 25th of February, but was merely seeking to bring me to the point of demanding my discharge by ungracious behavior. In the meanwhile I did not allow myself to depart from my resolution to subordinate my personal feelings to the interests of the service.

At the close of the discussion I asked His Majesty whether he insisted upon expressly ordering me to withdraw the order of 1852, on which the position of the Prime Minister depended. The answer was a curt "Yes." I did not as yet decide upon an immediate withdrawal, but proposed to take the command, as one says, "Sunday fashion," and to wait until I should receive warning to withdraw it, when I would ask for a written order and bring it forward for discussion by the Cabinet. I think I was even then convinced that I should not have to assume the initiative, and therewith the responsibility, for my retirement.

On the following day, while the English delegates to the Conference were at table with me, the chief of the Military Cabinet, General von Hahnke, appeared, and discussed the Kaiser's request that the order in question should be canceled. I explained the practical reasons, which have been given above, why the thing was, as a matter of procedure, impossible. A Prime Minister could not proceed without the authority conferred upon him by the order; if His Majesty wished to revoke the order he must do the same with the title of Prime Minister,[1] against which I had nothing to say. General von Hahnke left me with the remark that he took it upon himself to say that the matter could certainly be negotiated. (The order was *not* canceled after my dismissal.)[2]

On the following morning, the 17th of March, Hahnke returned, in order regretfully to inform me that His Majesty insisted on the revocation

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[1] *Präsident des Staatsministerium.*

[2] In the session of the Prussian Landtag of April 28, 1892, Count Eulenburg made the following declaration regarding the report then under discussion, relating to the position of the Prime Minister: "That the duty of the Prussian Prime Minister does not consist merely in presiding over deliberations and numbering votes, requires, I believe, no demonstration; it is the duty of the Prussian Minister-President to provide for the smooth and uniform progress of the business of state, and when necessary to represent the whole Cabinet. I believe, too, that the opinion expressed from the other side of the House, that his participation in affairs is very insignificant, is baseless." (Applause.) From this statement we may conclude that even to-day the revocation of the Cabinet order of 1852 concerning the authority of the Prime Minister, which played a predominant part in my dismissal, has not been accomplished; for if it had really been revoked the Prime Minister, Count Eulenburg, would hardly have been in a position to carry out the program expressed in the above words, which received the full approval of the Chamber of Deputies.

of the order, and was expecting, from the report which he, Hahnke, had given him of his conversation with me on the previous day, that I should forthwith hand in my resignation. I was to go to the palace in the afternoon, in order to take it myself. I replied that I was not well enough to do so and would write.

The same morning a number of reports came back from His Majesty, among them some from a consul in Russia. Appended to these was a note in His Majesty's hand, which was open and had passed through the departmental offices. It ran as follows:

> The reports make it as clear as possible that the Russians are strategically fully prepared to go to war—and I must greatly deplore the fact that I have received so few of the reports. You ought to have drawn my attention long ago to the terrible danger threatening! It is more than high time to warn the Austrians and to take counter-measures. In such circumstances I can of course no longer think of a journey to Krasnö.
>
> The reports are excellent.
>
> W.

The facts of the case are as follows: The consul in question, who seldom found safe opportunities, had sent in, at one time, fourteen more or less voluminous and skillful reports, running to over a hundred pages, the oldest of which were several months old, and whose contents presumably were not new to the General Staff. In dealing with the military contents of the reports the practice was that those which did not seem to be urgent

and important enough to be laid directly before the Kaiser by the Foreign Office were sent to the twofold address of the Minister of War and the chief of the General Staff, for their information, with the request that they should be returned. It was the business of the General Staff to sift what was military news from what was already known, and what was important from what was unimportant, and to bring the former items to His Majesty's knowledge through the Military Cabinet. In the case in question I had four of these reports, whose contents were partly political and partly military, laid directly before the Kaiser, and six, which were exclusively military in character, were sent to the two addresses above mentioned, while a written account of the four others was sent to the competent Council, in order to determine whether they contained anything that called for a higher decision. The Kaiser must have assumed that I had wished to withhold from him those reports which I sent to the General Staff, in contravention of the usual and only possible method of procedure. If I had wished to keep things secret from His Majesty I could easily have required the dishonest suppression of documents, not directly of the General Staff, whose chiefs were not all friendly to me, but, in the circumstances, of the Minister of War, Von Verdy.

Also, because a consul had reported certain military events which were in part three months old and were beyond his sphere of observation—

among others the posting of a few sotnias of Cossacks on the Austrian frontier (known to the General Staff)—Austria was to be alarmed, Russia threatened, war prepared for, and the visit which His Majesty had announced of his own accord abandoned; and because the consul's reports had arrived late I was implicitly reproached as a traitor to my country, as having withheld facts in order to conceal a danger threatening from without. I demonstrated in a memorial at once presented to His Majesty that all consular reports which were not laid directly before the Kaiser by the Foreign Office were immediately sent to the Minister of War and the General Staff. After my memorial (which was returned some days later without any marginal notes whatever, and also without any withdrawal of the serious accusation against the Foreign Office) had been sent off, I called a session of the Ministry for that afternoon. I must regard it as a caprice of fortune, and history will perhaps have reason to call it ominous, that on the morning of the same day Count Paul Schuvalov,[1] the ambassador from St. Petersburg, who had arrived overnight, reported himself to me with the statement that he was empowered to enter into certain negotiations for a treaty,[2] and that these negotiations fell through shortly afterward, when I was no longer Imperial Chancellor.

[1] Paul Count Schuvalov (1830–1908), Russian officer and diplomatist; 1885–94, Russian Ambassador in Berlin.

[2] Relating to the prolongation of a treaty lapsing in June, 1890, which assured us of Russia's neutrality if we were attacked by France.

I had prepared the following draft of the declaration to be made at the meeting of the Ministry:

I am doubtful whether I can any longer bear the responsibility which rests upon me for the Kaiser's policy, for the co-operation indispensable to such a course is not conceded to me. It surprised me that His Majesty had arrived at final decisions relating to the so-called labor-protection legislation with Boetticher, but without conferring with me and the Ministry; I expressed my fear at the time that this procedure would result in disorder during the Reichstag elections, arousing expectations which could not be fulfilled and which, because they could not be fulfilled, would finally diminish the authority of the Crown. I hoped that the remonstrances of the Ministry would induce His Majesty to abandon the designs which he had announced; however, I met with no concurrence on the part of my colleagues, but I found that my closest representative, Von Boetticher, had already, without me, effected an understanding in respect of the Kaiser's suggestions, and I convinced myself that several of my colleagues had judged this understanding to be advisable. After this I really could not be certain whether I, as Prime Minister, still possessed the authority which I required for the responsible guidance of the general policy. I have discovered that the Kaiser had been dealing not only with individual Ministers, but with individual councilors and other officials, subordinate to me; in particular the Minister of Commerce had presented reports to the Kaiser without any previous understanding with me. I have in this connection drawn the attention of Herr von Berlepsch to the order of September 8, 1852, which was unknown to him; and after I had convinced myself that in general this order had not been present to the minds of all the Ministers (and this was particularly true of my representative, Herr von Boetticher) I had a copy of it forwarded to each of them, and the covering letter laid stress upon the fact that I regarded it as relating only to reports presented to the sovereign which aimed at altering our laws and the existing legal situation. With

tactful handling the order comprised no more than was indispensable to every Prime Minister. His Majesty, from whatever quarter he was informed of this procedure, had commanded that I should see that the order was annulled. I was obliged to refuse to co-operate with him in this matter.

His Majesty had given me a further sign of his lack of confidence in his complaint that I should not have received the deputy Windthorst without his permission. To-day I am persuaded that I can no longer represent even His Majesty's foreign policy. Notwithstanding my confidence in the Triple Alliance, I have never lost sight of the possibility that it might at some time be dissolved; for in Italy the monarchy is not very firmly established; the engagement between Italy and Austria might be endangered by the Irredenta; in Austria only the trustworthiness of the present Emperor excludes a change during his lifetime; and it is never safe to count upon the attitude of Hungary. On this account I have constantly endeavored never quite to break down the bridge between us and Russia. [Here follows information concerning the Kaiser's letter respecting the military reports of a consul. See p. 106.]

I am, generally speaking, not in duty bound to lay all reports before His Majesty, but have done so in the case under discussion, some being forwarded directly and some through the General Staff, and owing to my confidence in the peaceful intentions of the Russian Emperor, I am not in a position to advocate the measures which His Majesty commands me to take.

His Majesty approved of my suggestions regarding the attitude to be observed toward the Reichstag, and an eventual dissolution of the same, but is now of opinion that the military proposals should be introduced only so far as one can count upon their acceptance by the present Reichstag.

The Minister of War has recently spoken in favor of introducing them as a whole, and if one had at the time seen danger approaching from Russia this would have been the proper course.

I assume that I am no longer in full agreement with my colleagues, just as I no longer enjoy a sufficient measure of His Majesty's confidence. I am glad that a King of Prussia wishes himself to govern; I recognize the disadvantage of my retirement to the public interest; I have no longing, since my health is now good, for a life without work; but I feel that I am in the Kaiser's way, and am officially informed through the Cabinet that he wishes me to retire. I have therefore at His Majesty's command begged for my release from service.

After I had offered an explanation corresponding to this draft, the vice-president of the Cabinet, Herr von Boetticher, spoke in favor of the idea which I had suggested earlier, that I should confine myself to the direction of foreign affairs. The Minister of Finance declared that the order of September 8, 1852, did not in any way exceed what was necessary, and he joined in Herr von Boetticher's request that an agreement might be sought. If no such agreement could be found the Ministry must consider whether they would not be obliged to follow in my steps. The Minister of Public Worship and Instruction and the Minister of Justice were of opinion that these were questions of a misunderstanding only, which must be explained to His Majesty, and the Minister of War added that he had not for a long time received any communication from His Majesty with reference to warlike developments in Russia. The Minister of Public Works alluded to my retirement as disastrous to the security of the nation and the peace of Europe; if it was not possible to prevent it the Ministers must, in his

opinion, place their portfolios at His Majesty's disposal, and he himself had the intention of so doing. The Minister of Agriculture declared that if I was persuaded that His Majesty desired my retirement it was impossible to dissuade me from such a step. The Ministry would in any case have to consider what steps it must take if I received my dismissal. After a few personal observations on the part of the Minister of Commerce and the Minister of War, I closed the meeting.

The official minutes of this meeting, which were, as usual, circulated among all the Ministers for correction, have, according to subsequent information on the part of the Minister von Miquel, disappeared from the records and have been destroyed, probably at the instigation of vice-president Von Boetticher.

After the meeting the Duke of Coburg paid me an hour's visit, during which nothing worth noting was said on his side.

Soon after dinner Lucanus appeared, the head of the Civil Cabinet, and hesitatingly executed the commission with which His Majesty had intrusted him, which was to ask "why the resignation demanded that morning had not yet been delivered." I replied that the Kaiser could dismiss me at any moment without my initiative, and that I could not contemplate remaining in his service against his will; but I wished to arrange for my resignation so that I could afterward publish the facts. I had no intention of accepting the

responsibility for my own retirement, but should leave it to His Majesty; the opportunity for a public explanation of its genesis, my right to which was contested by Lucanus, would very soon occur.

While Lucanus was discharging his inconsequent errand, my hitherto equable temper perforce gave way to a feeling of mortification, which increased when Caprivi, even before I had received the answer to my resignation, took possession of a portion of my official residence. Here was an eviction without respite, which I, considering my age and the length of my service, very justly regarded as a piece of brutality. Even to-day I have not recovered from the consequences of my hasty eviction. Under Wilhelm I it would have been impossible, even in the case of incompetent officials.

On the afternoon of the 18th of March I sent in my resignation.

My draft of this resignation ran as follows:

In connection with my respectful proposal of the 15th of this month Your Majesty has commanded me to present a draft order by which the Royal Order of the 8th of September, 1852, which has since then regulated the position of the Prime Minister in respect of his colleagues, should be annulled.

I will permit myself to make the following most respectful statement concerning the origin and significance of this order.

In the time of absolute sovereignty, there was no need of the post of Prime Minister.[1] The need was first demonstrated, in the United Landtag of 1847, by the then Liberal

[1] *Präsident des Staatsministerium.*

deputy Mevissen, of clearing the way for a constitutional state of affairs by the appointment of a Prime Minister, whose duty it would be to watch over the unification of the policy of the responsible Ministers, and to carry out the same, and to accept the responsibility for the joint results of the Cabinet's policy. With the year 1848 the constitutional habit became part of our life, and Prime Ministers were appointed, such as Count Arnim, Count Camphausen, Count Brandenburg, Freiherr von Manteuffel, and Prince von Hohenzollern, whose names are in a pre-eminent degree connected with the responsibility, not for a ministerial department, but for the joint policy of the Cabinet, and the unification of the departments. Most of these gentlemen had no department of their own, but only the Premiership; such were Prince von Hohenzollern, the Minister von Auerswald, and Prince Hohenlohe. But it was incumbent upon them to maintain, in the Cabinet and in its relations with the monarch, that unity and stability without which ministerial responsibility, as constituting the essence of constitutional life, cannot be realized. The relations of the Ministry and its individual members to this new institution of the Premiership very soon necessitated a stricter regulation, corresponding with the Constitution, such as was effected, in agreement with the Ministry of the day, by the order of September 8, 1852. This order has since then remained of decisive importance to the position of the Prime Minister, and has alone given the Prime Minister the authority which makes it possible to accept that measure of responsibility for the joint policy of the Cabinet which is expected of him in the Landtag and by public opinion. If every individual Minister can extract orders from the sovereign, without a previous understanding with his colleagues, a united Cabinet policy, for which each Minister shall be responsible, is not possible. None of the Ministers, and particularly not the Prime Minister, could possibly any longer assume the constitutional responsibility for the joint policy of the Cabinet. In the days of the absolute monarchy such a definition of

procedure as that comprised in the order of 1852 was unnecessary, and it would be so to-day if we were to go back to absolutism without ministerial responsibility. But in accordance with the constitutional arrangements now current a presidential direction of the Ministry on the basis of the principle of the order in question is indispensable. In this connection, as was established in yesterday's Cabinet meeting, my colleagues are as a whole in agreement with me, and also in this respect, that any successor of mine in the Premiership would be unable to assume the responsibility for his administration if the authority bestowed by the order of 1852 were lacking to him. To each of my successors this necessity will appear even more forcibly than to me, because he will not immediately be assisted by the authority which many years of the Premiership and the confidence of both the late Kaisers has lent me. I have not hitherto found it necessary expressly to refer my colleagues to the order of 1852. Its existence, and the certainty that I possessed the confidence of the late Kaisers Wilhelm and Friedrich, were sufficient securely to establish my authority in the Ministry. This certainty no longer exists to-day, either for myself or my colleagues. On this account I have been obliged to fall back upon the order of 1852, that I might securely establish the necessary centralization of Your Majesty's service.

For the foregoing reasons I am not in a position to carry out Your Majesty's command, according to which I was to accomplish and countersign the abrogation of the order of 1852, of which I had been only lately reminded, but was nevertheless to continue in the Premiership.

According to the information which Lieutenant General von Hahnke and Privy Cabinet Councilor von Lucanus gave me yesterday, I can no longer doubt that Your Majesty knows and believes that it is not possible for me to abrogate the order and still to remain Prime Minister. Nevertheless, Your Majesty has upheld the command given me on the 15th of this month, and has given me to understand that, having made my resignation *necessary* thereby, he will *accept* it.

After earlier conversations which I had with Your Majesty concerning the question whether Your Majesty no longer desired me to remain in your service, I ventured to assume that it would be acceptable to Your Majesty if I resigned my posts in the Prussian service, but remained in the imperial service. I have, after close examination of this question, permitted myself respectfully to draw attention to a few critical results of this division of my offices, particularly in respect of the future appearances of the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag, while refraining from recapitulating in this place all the results which such a separation between Prussia and the Imperial Chancellor would produce. Your Majesty was pleased to approve that for a time "everything should remain with the old man." But as I had the honor of explaining, it is not possible for me to retain the position of Prime Minister after Your Majesty has repeatedly commanded, in respect of this position, the *capitis diminutio* which resides in the abrogation of the fundamental order of 1852.

Your Majesty was also pleased, in connection with my respectful report of the 15th inst., to set limits to the extension of my official privileges, which do not leave me the measure of participation in the affairs of the state, of supervision over the latter, and of freedom in my ministerial decisions and my intercourse with the Reichstag and its members, which I require if I am to accept the constitutional responsibility for my official activities.

But even if it were practicable to carry out our foreign policy so independently of our domestic policy, and our imperial policy so independently of our Prussian policy as would be the case if the Imperial Chancellor had as little to do with Prussian as with Bavarian or Saxon politics, and had no interest in the re-establishment of the Prussian vote in the Federal Council and the Reichstag, yet I should find it impossible, in accordance with the latest decision of Your Majesty, concerning the direction of our foreign policy, as contained in the note with which Your Majesty accompanied the return of the reports from the Kieff consul, to

undertake the execution of Your Majesty's written commands in respect of our foreign policy. I should thereby call in question all the results of importance to the German Empire which our foreign policy has for decades, under unfavorable circumstances, achieved, in the opinion of both Your Majesty's predecessors, as regards our relations with Russia, and whose unexpectedly great significance for the present and the future was demonstrated to me by Count Schuvalov upon his return from St. Petersburg.

It is very painful to me, in my attachment to the service of the Royal House and to Your Majesty, and after long years of familiarity with conditions which I had regarded as permanent, to sever myself from the accustomed relations with Your Majesty and the general policy of the Empire and of Prussia; but after conscientious consideration of Your Majesty's intentions, which I should have to be prepared to carry out were I to remain in the service, I cannot do otherwise than most humbly beseech Your Majesty graciously to please release me, with the statutory pension, from the offices of Imperial Chancellor, Prime Minister, and Prussian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

After my impressions of the last few weeks and the disclosures which I gathered yesterday from the communications of Your Majesty's Civil and Military Cabinets, I may in all respects assume that I am meeting Your Majesty's wishes by this my request for leave to resign, and also that I may with safety assume that Your Majesty will graciously grant my request.

I would have submitted the request for my discharge from my offices to Your Majesty a long time ago, if I had not had the impression that it was Your Majesty's wish to make use of the experience and the capacities of a faithful servant of your predecessors. Now that I am sure that Your Majesty does not require these, I am able to retire from public life without the fear that my decision will be condemned as untimely by public opinion.

VON BISMARCK.

To His Majesty the Emperor and King.

I took an opportunity to inform the heads of the Civil and Military Cabinets, Lucanus and Hahnke, that the abandonment of the campaign against Social Democracy and the arousing of hopes that could not be fulfilled had filled me with heavy forebodings.

On the evening of the 18th the generals commanding in Berlin were sent for to go to the palace. The ostensible reason given for this procedure was that His Majesty wished to hear what they had to say of the military proposals. But as a matter of fact the Kaiser addressed the gathering—which lasted barely twenty minutes—and at its conclusion he told the generals, or so I was credibly informed, that he found himself compelled to dismiss me; and to the chief of the General Staff, Von Waldersee, he expressed his annoyance at my arbitrary methods and my secrecy in my intercourse with Russia. Count Waldersee had, with His Majesty, as a matter of departmental procedure, received the report on the above-mentioned consular reports. None of the generals, not even Count Moltke, had anything to say to the Kaiser's revelations. It was not until he was on the stairs that Count Moltke said, "This is a very regrettable proceeding; the young gentleman will give us plenty to think about yet."

On the 19th of March, at the levee, my son was near Schuvalov. The latter told him, in the endeavor to induce him to stay, that if he and I did not remain the overtures which he was

charged to make would come to nothing. Since these remarks might possibly influence the political decision of the Kaiser, my son, in the afternoon of the following day, communicated them to His Majesty in an autograph report.

I do not know whether it was before or right after the receipt of this report; at all events, on the 20th, Adjutant Count Widel, who had been on service, went to my son, in order to repeat the Kaiser's wish, which had already been announced by deputy, that my son should remain in his office, to offer him a long period of leave, and to assure him of His Majesty's absolute confidence. My son did not believe that he possessed this last, because the Kaiser had repeatedly sent for councilors from the Foreign Office without his knowledge, for the purpose of giving them orders or to find out how the land lay. Widel granted this, and assured him that His Majesty would without doubt be prepared to redress this grievance. To this my son replied that his health was so debilitated that without me he could not assume the difficult and responsible position. Later, after I had received my discharge, Count Widel sought me out also and asked me to influence my son in the direction of remaining. I turned his request aside with the words, "My son is of age."

On the afternoon of the 20th of March Hahnke and Lucanus brought me my papers of discharge in two blue envelopes. Lucanus had been to my son the previous day, on a commission from His Majesty, in order to induce him to sound me con-

cerning the granting of the title of duke and the proposal of a corresponding grant of money by the Landtag. My son, without reflection, declared that both would be undesired and distressing to me, and in the afternoon, after conferring with me, he wrote to Lucanus that "the grant of a title would, after the way in which I was treated in His Majesty's earliest youth, be distressing to me, and a grant of money, in view of the financial situation and for personal reasons, would be unacceptable." In spite of this the title of duke was conferred upon me.

The two orders addressed to me on the 20th ran as follows:

My dear Prince!

With deep emotion I have perceived, from your request of the 18th inst., that you are determined to retire from the offices which you have filled for many years with incomparable results. I had hoped that I should not be obliged to consider more closely the idea of parting with you in our lifetime. If I am none the less compelled, in the full consciousness of the grievous importance of your retirement, to familiarize myself with this idea, I do it indeed with an afflicted heart, but in the confident expectation that the granting of your request will contribute toward sparing and preserving your life—irreplaceable to the Fatherland—and your energies, as long as possible. The motives of your resolve which you have put forward convince me that further attempts to persuade you to take back your offer would have no prospect of success. I therefore respond to your wish, in that I herewith grant you the requested discharge from our offices as Imperial Chancellor, Prime Minister, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, with my good will and in the assurance that *your counsel and your energy, your loyalty*

and devotion, will not fail me, and the Fatherland, in the future also. I have regarded it as one of the most merciful dispensations of my life that I had you beside me, as my first adviser, at the time when I succeeded to the government. What you have effected and attained for Prussia and Germany, what you have been to my House, my predecessors, and myself, will remain a grateful and imperishable memory for me and the German people. But even abroad your wise and energetic peace policy, which I, too, am resolved, in future and out of complete conviction, to make the pattern of my own dealings, will always be recollected with glorious approbation.

To reward your service adequately is not within my power. I must in this connection be satisfied with assuring you of my and the Fatherland's imperishable gratitude. As a token of this gratitude I confer upon you the dignity of a Duke of Lauenburg. I will also have my life-size portrait sent to you.

God bless you, my dear Prince, and grant you yet many years of an untroubled old age, illumined by the consciousness of duty loyally accomplished.

With these sentiments I remain, in the future also, in loyalty bound, your grateful

Kaiser and King,

WILHELM, I.R.

. . . . . .

I cannot see you leave the position in which you have worked so many years for my House, as for the greatness and welfare of the Fatherland, without also calling to mind, as War Lord, in secret gratitude, the irreplaceable services which you have performed in connection with my army. With far-seeing circumspection and iron steadfastness you stood by the side of my grandfather, now resting in God, in the difficult times when the point at issue was the accomplishment of that reorganization of our military forces which was recognized as necessary. You have helped to build the

track on which the army, with God's help, may be led from victory to victory. Heroically you did your duty as a soldier in the great war, and since then, down to this day, you have, with unresting heedfulness and self-sacrifice, been prepared to step forward as the keeper of that valor which our people inherited from their fathers, and therewith to guarantee the continuance of the benefits of peace.

I know myself one with my army when I cherish the desire to see the man who has accomplished such great things henceforth in the highest rank. I therefore appoint you Colonel General [1] of Cavalry with the rank of a General Field Marshal, and hope to God that you may for many years yet be left to fill this honorable position.

WILHELM.

Since then my counsel has not at any time been demanded either directly or through an intermediary; on the contrary, my successsors appear to be forbidden to discuss politics with me. I have the impression that in the case of all officials and officers who hold on to their places there is a boycott against me; not only professional, but social also. This boycott found a curious official expression in the diplomatic pardon extended to my successor on account of the discredit thrown upon the person of his predecessor abroad.

I expressed my thanks for the military promotion in the following letter:

I respectfully thank Your Majesty for the gracious words with which you have accompanied my dismissal, and I feel myself greatly favored by the gift of the portrait, which for me and mine will be an honorable memorial of the time during which Your Majesty permitted me to devote my energies to the imperial service. Your Majesty has had the kindness

[1] *General-Oberst.* (*Trans.*)

"DROPPING THE PILOT"—ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS CARTOONS EVER DRAWN—WHICH APPEARED IN "PUNCH" MARCH 29, 1890, A WEEK AFTER BISMARCK'S DISMISSAL. WHEN THE GERMAN SHIP OF STATE CRASHED ON THE ROCKS UNDER THE UNSKILLED HELMSMANSHIP OF THE KAISER, THE CARTOONIST'S PROPHETIC CONCEPTION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EPISODE ILLUSTRATED RECEIVED STRIKING CONFIRMATION

at the same time to bestow upon me the dignity of a Duke of Lauenburg. I have respectfully permitted myself to lay before Privy Cabinet Councilor von Lucanus, verbally, the reasons which make it difficult for me to bear a title of this nature, and thereto I added the request that this further act of grace should not be made public. The fulfillment of this request of mine was not possible, because the official publication had already taken place in the *Staats-Anzeiger* at the time when I was able to express my scruples. But I venture most submissively to beseech Your Majesty graciously to permit me to continue to bear the name and title which I have hitherto borne. As for the military, promotion which so greatly honors me, I submissively beg Your Majesty to allow me to lay my respectful thanks at Your Majesty's feet as soon as I am in a position to make the official announcement, for the moment delayed by indisposition.

On the morning of the 21st, at ten o'clock, while my son was at the Lehrter railway station to receive the Prince of Wales, His Majesty said to him: "You have misunderstood Schuvalov, to judge by your letter of yesterday; he has just been speaking to me. He wants to visit you this afternoon and put matters straight." My son replied that he could no longer deal with Schuvalov, for he was on the point of sending in his resignation. His Majesty would not hear of such a proposal: "he would grant my son all facilities, and that afternoon or later would discuss matters with him in detail; he must remain." Schuvalov, too, called on my son that afternoon, but declined to make overtures, since his instructions were to deal with my son and myself, not with our successors. Concerning the audience that morning, he told us that he had been awakened at 1 A.M.

by a military policeman, who had brought him a two-line note from the aide-de-camp, an appointment for 8.45 A.M. He had been greatly agitated, supposing that something had happened to the Tsar. At the audience His Majesty had spoken of politics, expressing himself as ready to make advances, and declared that he wished to continue the policy which had so far been followed; and he, Schuvalov, had informed St. Petersburg of this.

To a question of Caprivi's as to a suitable successor my son mentioned (on the 23d) the ambassador in Brussels, Von Alvensleben.[1] Caprivi stated that he was on good terms with him, and expressed himself as against a non-Prussian at the head of the Foreign Office. His Majesty had named Marschall to him. In the meantime the Kaiser informed my son, whom he met at breakfast at the Dragoons' mess, that Alvensleben was also quite acceptable to him.

On the morning of the 26th my son showed Caprivi the ropes of the Secretariat. The latter found the conditions too complicated—he would be obliged to simplify them—and he mentioned that Alvensleben had been with him that morning; but the more he lectured him the more obstinate he became in his refusal. My son agreed that he would make another attempt with Alvensleben that afternoon and inform Caprivi of the result. In the course of the same day he received his

[1] Friedrich Johann Count von Alvensleben, born 1836; Prussian diplomatist, 1888–1901; Minister to Brussels, then ambassador to St. Petersburg.

discharge, without having had the conversation which the Kaiser had given him reason to expect.

My son endeavored in the afternoon, as promised, in company with the ambassador, Von Schweinitz, who was present on leave, to induce Herr von Alvensleben to accept the position as his successor, but without success. Alvensleben declared that he would rather abandon his career than become Secretary of State, but he, nevertheless, promised not to make up his mind finally until he had spoken to the Kaiser.

On the morning of the 27th the Kaiser called on my son, and in the midst of repeated embraces expressed the hope that he would soon see him rested and back in the service, and asked how matters stood in respect of Alvensleben. Afterward my son reported, and His Majesty expressed his astonishment that Alvensleben had not yet presented himself; he immediately made an appointment for the latter to be at the palace at half past twelve.

My son betook himself to Caprivi and informed him of Alvensleben's attitude. He told him that His Majesty had sent for him, and he recapitulated the reasons by which he himself had endeavored to influence him. Thereupon Caprivi expressed himself somewhat as follows:

"That's all too late now. Yesterday he had submitted to His Majesty that Alvensleben was unwilling, and thereupon he was authorized to apply to Marschall. Marschall had at once declared himself to be ready, with the additional remark

that he had already had the consent of his grand duke for his transfer to the imperial service, and his official request to Karlsruhe was only a matter of form. If Alvensleben were to accept now there would be nothing else for him (Caprivi) to do but resign. He would report at the palace at 12.45, and remind His Majesty of yesterday's commission to Marschall."

Alvensleben, who was received at the palace immediately before Caprivi, had not been persuaded even by the Kaiser. As the latter informed Caprivi of this fact, with an expression of his regret, Caprivi replied that it was very fortunate, and had saved him from a great dilemma, for he had already settled matters with Marschall. The Kaiser exclaimed, briefly, "Good, then; it's Marschall." Caprivi had not awaited the result of my son's conversation with Alvensleben, but had secured the ambassador from Baden before this took place.

The Grand Duke of Baden, who had learned from remarks made by my son, in the presence of Herr von Marschall, that his decisive influence over the Kaiser had come to my knowledge, paid me a call on the 24th and left me in an ungracious frame of mind. I told him that he had interfered with the Imperial Chancellor in his own competence, and had made my position with regard to His Majesty impossible.

On the 26th of March I took leave of the Kaiser. His Majesty said that "anxiety for my health alone" had induced him to consent to my resigna-

tion. I replied that my health had seldom been so good of late years as during the past winter. The publication of my resignation was postponed. Simultaneously with his installation Caprivi had already taken possession of part of the Chancellor's official residence; I saw that ambassadors, Ministers, and diplomatists were obliged to wait on the ground floor, a coercive measure compelling me to expedite my packing and my departure. On the 29th of March I left Berlin under the compulsion of this overhasty evacuation of my residence, receiving in the railway station the military salute ordered by the Kaiser, which I might justifiably have called my first-class funeral obsequies.

Before this I received the following letter from His Majesty the Kaiser Franz Joseph:

VIENNA, *March 22, 1890.*

DEAR PRINCE:

The news, which evokes my fullest sympathy, that you consider that the time has come to withdraw yourself from the grinding fatigue and anxieties of your office, has now received your official confirmation. Much as I desire and hope that your shaken health will improve, if you will not grudge yourself rest after so many years of uninterrupted, successful, and glorious statesman-like efficacy, as little can I leave unuttered the feelings of sincere regret with which I regard your departure from the direction of the foreign affairs of the German Empire, which is so close a neighbor. I shall always most gratefully acknowledge that you have conceived the relations between Germany and Austria-Hungary in a spirit of loyal friendship, and have founded, by your consistent and loyal co-operation with persons in my confidence, the conditions of the now unshakable alliance,

which corresponds with the interests of both empires, as it does with my desires and those of your sovereign and Kaiser. I congratulate myself that I have contributed by my support and my unreserved confidence to the fate of efforts of such importance to the Continent; and I know how gratefully I realize that I can count upon you, on all occasions, for the same loyal honesty and indefatigable co-operation. May you still be granted the satisfaction of seeing, through a long period of years, how the bond of friendship between Germany and Austria, joined fast by you in the difficult days in which we are living, proves to be a safe bulwark not only for the allies, but also for the peace of Europe. Receive, my dear Prince, the assurance that my heartfelt wishes always accompany you, that I think of you with feelings of sincere esteem and friendship, and that it will give me the keenest pleasure, whenever the opportunity offers itself to you, to give yet a further demonstration of your devoted patriotism and your long-proved and sagacious experience.

FRANZ JOSEPH.

At Christmas, 1890, Kaiser Wilhelm had a collection of photographs of the rooms of Wilhelm I's palace sent to me; I thanked him for it in the following letter:

FRIEDRICHSRUH,
December 25, 1890.

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS KAISER,
MOST GRACIOUS KING AND MASTER:

I take the liberty of laying at your feet my respectful thanks for the Christmas present sent me at Your Majesty's command. To me it represents in perfect facsimile the places with which my recollections of my late master are predominantly connected, and in which he showed me, for more than half a century, his gracious good will, which he retained

to the end of his days. To my most dutiful thanks for this souvenir of the past I join my respectful good wishes for the coming New Year.

In deepest respect I remain

Your Majesty's

Most dutiful servant,

v. Bismarck.

CHAPTER IX

COUNT CAPRIVI

How long and how profoundly the departmental jealousy which had its rise in the war of 1866 was responsible afterward for causing ill humor in the army, and how far it found support in the increasing ill will of my equals in rank and my former party comrades, I perceived from a communication made to me by Field Marshal von Manteuffel (among others) to the effect that General von Caprivi had expressed himself to him of his own accord and in urgent terms concerning the danger which had been created by my, the leading Minister's, "enmity toward the army," and in this connection had requested the marshal to help him by using his influence with the King. This outbreak of latent enmity, unexpected even to the field marshal, and Caprivi's simultaneous dealings with the gatherings which centered round Count Roon and in the house of the Privy Councilor von Lebbin (Minister of the Interior), who was an ally of Caprivi's, and which were energetically working against me, did not destroy the high opinion which I entertained of his military talents, as a result of the testimony of competent witnesses. Before and after his appointment to

the head of the navy, which took place in 1883, against my advice, I importuned Kaiser Wilhelm not to withdraw from the land forces, in view of the then doubtful prospects of peace, a general who enjoyed to such an extent the confidence of the army; not to interrupt in such a manner the sympathy which he had for the army, and which, on the outbreak of war, he would first of all be obliged to renew. I importuned him particularly to assign Caprivi a share in the direction of the General Staff as soon as Count Moltke should need assistance. The latter, however, was not inclined to accept Caprivi's assistance, declaring that he would rather resign, a thing which the Kaiser wished in any case to prevent. Apart from this His Majesty felt the need—which was doubtless justified—of correcting certain faults which were said to have gained ground under General von Stosch, by means of a soldierly, disciplined character such as Caprivi. My own wish was to see the control of the navy placed in the hands of a sailor. Here was a similar situation to that which occurred under the Kaiser Friedrich, when he, annoyed by Waldersee's and the Countess Waldersee's relations with Stöcker, declared to me that he wished to appoint Waldersee to the General Staff, and I, in this case, named Caprivi as a suitable successor to Count Haseler. Caprivi was more intimate with the Kaiser, but on sounding the field marshal His Majesty encountered the same decided refusal as his father had done. Caprivi was too independent in his judg-

ment, in the military sphere, for Wilhelm II, but in the political sphere he was not His Majesty's match in the matter of training.

I had voluntarily retired from the post of Minister of Commerce, only because I was not willing to furnish the responsible counter-signatures for what was so much "Love's Labor Lost," as far as Social Democracy was concerned, and for legislation relating to the compulsion of labor and Sunday labor, of the kind to which the Kaiser had been won over by certain reigning sovereigns and Von Boetticher and other backstairs intriguers.

At that time I still had the intention of remaining Chancellor and Prime Minister, because I held this to be a point of honor in view of the difficulties which I anticipated in the immediate future. In particular I felt that I could not myself accept the responsibility for my retirement from the imperial Foreign Office, but that I must wait until His Majesty should assume the initiative in this respect. To this point of honor I held fast, even when the Kaiser's attitude toward me prompted me to put the direct question "whether I was in His Majesty's way." In the reply, that I must still support the new military proposals—Von Verdy's—I read an affirmative answer to my inquiry, and intimated the possibility of his replacing me as Prime Minister and leaving me at my post as Chancellor. At that time I thought I was still in agreement with His Majesty as regards my remaining as Chancellor, while the intentions of the King, in which I did not feel that I could

co-operate in a responsible manner, concerned, in the first place, the functions of Prussian Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce. The latter post I resigned immediately after His Majesty had resolved to retain Governor von Berlepsch, recommending Von Berlepsch as my successor. In this situation I assumed that we must have, at the head of affairs, not such a man as Boetticher, but a general officer with the sense of honor peculiar to the Prussian officers' corps. I was not without anxiety lest the Kaiser's choice, in accordance with the influence which, to judge by his own declaration in Council on the 24th of January, such unofficial persons as Hinzpeter, Douglas, Heyden, and Berlepsch, and such officials as Boetticher had obtained over him, might be determined by the belief that the revolutionary peril could be fought by acquiring popularity. I was much disturbed by the Kaiser's inclination to win over his enemies by amiability, instead of inspiring his friends with courage and confidence. Moreover, the destructive criticism of my policy, which in my absence was brought to bear from the direction of Baden, increased my fear of civilian concession hunters and advisers, and of successors without a political sense of honor, who would injure the monarchy in order to retain their positions. This anxiety was based upon my observations of my colleagues in the Ministry.

I had heard that the Kaiser had allayed the misgivings which Caprivi had expressed as to becoming my successor with the words: "There's no need

for you to be anxious; one man's much like another, and I'll accept the responsibility for all transactions." Let us hope that the next generation will gather the fruits of this kingly self-confidence.

When Caprivi had overcome the misgivings which he entertained as to taking over the post of Chancellor, he expressed himself concerning them, in the one short conversation which we had after his appointment, through the open door of the room which he had appropriated in the wing of my house, in the following words: "If in battle, at the head of my Tenth Army Corps, I received an order such that I feared its execution would lead to the loss of the corps, the battle, and my own life, and if the representation of my genuine misgivings had no result, nothing would be left for me but to carry out the order and perish. What else? It's a case of man overboard!" In this conception we have the most exact expression of the mentality of the army officer, which has constituted the ultimate foundation of the strength of Prussia in this and the previous century, and will, it is to be hoped, continue to do so. But when it charges itself with legislation and politics, foreign and domestic, this element, which in its own sphere is worthy of all admiration, has none the less its dangers: the modern policy of the German Empire, with a free press and a parliamentary Constitution, in the thick of European difficulties, would not be carried out, as a royal decree is executed, by general officers, even if the talents

of the German Emperor and King of Prussia concerned were more than equal to those of Friedrich II.

In Herr von Caprivi's place I should not have accepted the position of Imperial Chancellor; a Prussian general of high rank, who enjoys more than others the confidence of our corps of officers, is too distinguished a man to become Cabinet Minister or adjutant in a sphere which is strange to him; and politics is, after all, not a battlefield, but merely the expert handling of the problem whether and when war is necessary, and how one can honorably guard against it. I can only regard Caprivi's theory as valid in situations where the existence of the monarchy and the Fatherland is at stake—situations in connection with which the idea of dictatorship has developed during the course of history; for example, I regard the situation of 1862 as one of this nature.

How strictly, I might say with what subordination, Caprivi followed his "orders" is shown by the fact that he asked me no questions, made no inquiry of me, concerning the condition of the state affairs which he was on the point of taking over, nor concerning the aims and intentions hitherto pursued by the imperial government and the means of their accomplishment. I gathered from this that he had definite orders to refrain from discussing any question with me, in order not to weaken the impression that the Kaiser intended to rule by himself, without a Chancellor. It has never been my experience that the transfer of a lease did not demand a certain understanding

between the outgoing and the incoming tenant; but in the government of the German Empire, with all its complicated relations, no such necessity was apparent. The indication in my discharge, that the Kaiser would make use of my advice, was never applied in practice, and it so happens that I never saw my successor's signature, either at the time of my dismissal or later, whether officially or privately, excepting at the foot of a decision—unfavorable to me—relating to my pension.[1] My experience in German politics went back forty years, and my successor was no more familiar with the political situation as a result of the change of office than he had been at the head of the Tenth Army Corps.

The reason why His Majesty had decided to dismiss me, and to order me, in my old age, to accept a sudden change of residence and of activities, I never learned from him, either officially or by word of mouth, even when I saw him again after the lapse of four years: I have only been able to arrive at a conjectural explanation, which is possibly quite incorrect. All sorts of lies may have reached my sovereign; he has told me nothing of them and has asked me for no explanation. I have had the impression that the Kaiser did not wish me to appear in Berlin before and after the New Year of 1890, because he knew that I should express myself in the Reichstag with regard to Social Democracy in accordance with my own

[1] I was required, among other things, to return the proportion of my quarterly salary (paid on January 1st) for the eleven days from the date of my dismissal (March 20–31).

convictions, and not in accordance with the convictions which had in the meantime become his, and which were first made known to me at the State Council of the 24th of January. According to information which reached me directly and through my son, His Majesty had reserved his decision as to the date of my retirement. I received it in the form of an invitation to the Council on the 25th of January, with the command that I should appear half an hour before the deliberations commenced. I assumed that I was to learn what was to be discussed in the Council. But I did not, and I followed His Majesty through the Nun's walk to the council-chamber just as ignorant of the disclosures about to be made to us as were my colleagues, with the exception of Boetticher.

Even after my dismissal the greatest care was taken not to enter into any sort of relations with me, apparently in order to avoid arousing the suspicion that any need was felt of profiting by my experience and my knowledge of men and things. I was strictly boycotted, and kept under quarantine, as the source of the germs of the infectious disease from which we had suffered, politically, when I was Chancellor. His military fashion of understanding things, accentuated, in office and previously, by the psychological consequences of a tantalizing youth, which in a Guards officer without means was not free from bitterness and privation, may have contributed, in Caprivi, to the feeling that to end his years in the

highest position in the state meant an act of just compensation on the part of fate. That the resentment toward people in my position from which he must have suffered for twenty years or more had survived this period, I gather from the fact that his relations with me, from the moment of the first overtures which the Kaiser made to him, were not actuated, either in Berlin or in Vienna, by straightforward, downright, essential considerations, as my relations with him had always been, in spite of his unfriendly feeling toward me, of which I was aware. I did not succeed in overcoming this feeling during the period when we were colleagues in the imperial service, at the time of his administration of the navy, in spite of all the expenditure of personal amiability which I devoted to this purpose; in the presence of persons of substance and position the youthful impressions of an officer who for years was tantalized by possessing no allowance invariably came to the surface.[1]

[1] I cannot deny that my confidence in the character of my successor suffered a shock when I heard that he had cut down the ancient trees in front of the garden of his—formerly my—residence. These trees constituted an adornment of the official imperial premises of the Residence which it would take centuries to renew and which cannot be replaced. Kaiser Wilhelm I, who spent many happy days of his youth in the Chancellor's garden, would have no rest in his grave if he knew that his former Officer of the Guard had cut down his beloved old trees, which had not their like in Berlin or the neighborhood, in order to obtain *un poco più di luce*. This extermination of trees is not a German, but a Slavish trait. The Slavs and the Celts, both undoubtedly related races, and both akin to the Germans, are no tree-lovers, as every one knows who has been in Poland and France. Their towns and villages stand treeless amid the fields, like a Nuremburg toy on the table. I would pardon Herr von Caprivi many differences of political opinion rather than the ruthless destruction of ancient trees, in which he infringed the *law* regarding state premises by causing the deterioration of the same.

I had for a long time had the feeling that I was regarded, by a considerable proportion of my Prussian colleagues, and of my subordinates in the Empire, as an incumbrance, an incubus whose pressure would hinder their own progressive promotion, but I believe that any Prime Minister and Imperial Chancellor would have had the same feeling who had striven, as long as I did, unremittingly to do his duty, in that he sought, as far as was humanly possible, to maintain the unity and moderation of the various departments in respect of one another, and in the face of the justified expectations of the governed and their individual class interests.

The duty here indicated can without violation of our institutions be performed by the monarch in his character of German Emperor and King of Prussia just as well as by an Imperial Chancellor and Prime Minister, if the monarch possesses the requisite preparatory training and capacity for work, and discusses matters with his Ministers in a pertinent manner, not as a monarch. Even if he does the latter he should nevertheless always feel it necessary—and indeed he is compelled by his oath in respect of the Prussian Constitution—to listen to the advice of his Ministers before he comes to a decision, and to consider what his constitutional responsibility requires of him. But if he did not do so, and if his mere command as the King of Prussia were to meet with silent obedience from his place-hunting Ministers, and if this obedience were to be communicated to the Prus-

sian voters in the Bundesrath—in other words, if the King of Prussia in his Cabinet were to assume the position of the French king in the *lit de justice* (*hoc volo, sic jubeo*), and if he were then to find a Minister who would accept the still existing position of private secretary, the kingdom would be left in a state of unprotectedness in the face of parliamentary and press criticism which is not compatible with our present arrangements. The Ministers are entitled to urge upon parliament the consideration that the King, who in Prussia is the third term of the legislative power, stands behind them, but not, I think—as has happened since my resignation—to absolve themselves from the vindication of their own convictions, by the argument that the King has commanded such and such a measure. The weight of the King's personal opinion may well be appealed to by a Minister in recommendation of the measure which he is advocating, but never in order to cover his own responsibility for the measure advocated. Abuses of this kind are apt to dissipate the responsibility which should be the Minister's, and to transfer it to the monarch, who is not present in parliament.

A Minister would be justified in saying, in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, that any motion in the House of Peers would not be approved and had better be modified for the sake of agreement. With equal constitutional justification he might say that any other motion would not pass the highest and equally privileged legislative factor—the King. (Art. 62 of the Constitution.)

CHAPTER X

KAISER WILHELM II

As regards his natural endowment with the characteristics of his forbears, the Kaiser has inherited a certain diversity of talents. He has the love of splendor, the leaning toward court ceremonial, enhanced, on solemn occasions, by costume, of our first kings, combined with a lively susceptibility to adroit approbation. The autocratic temper of the age of Friedrich I has been essentially modified by the lapse of time; but if it had lain within the legal possibilities of the present period, I believe I should not have been spared the fate of Count Eberhard Danckelmann as the conclusion of my political career. Considering the brief duration of life on which I can count in my old age, I should not have tried to evade a dramatic conclusion of my political career, and I would have endured even this irony of fate with cheerful submissiveness to the will of God. Even in the most serious situations in life I have never lost my sense of humor.

The Kaiser displayed inherited sympathies similar to those of Friedrich Wilhelm I, first of all in the superficiality of his predilection for a "tall fellow." If the Kaiser's aides-de-camp were passed

under the measure you would find that they were almost all officers of unusual stature, six feet or more in height. It once happened that a tall, unknown officer announced himself at the court residence in the Marble Palace, demanding access to His Majesty, and on being questioned declared that he was appointed aide-de-camp—a statement which at first, after further inquiry, was accepted in good faith by His Majesty. The new aide towered above his comrades, but it was not without difficulty that he convinced them of his title to the post at the time of his first appearance in the palace.

The inclination of Friedrich Wilhelm I and Friedrich II toward the autocratic control of governmental affairs,[1] and their faith in the justification of *hoc volo, sic jubeo*,[2] are still impressed upon the inheritance of the race. But these sovereigns governed as autocrats, as was the tendency of their age, without considering whether the way in which they governed gained applause for them or otherwise. It is scarcely

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[1] I remember that in 1859, at the time of my departure for Petersburg, I received the ungracious answer to my criticism of the incapacity of the Ministers of the Regent, as a body, "Perhaps you take me for a blockhead!" To which I replied that even a Prussian Landrath at the present day would administer its district neither willingly nor well without a useful district secretary, but that the monarchy had long ago grown beyond the possibility of Cabinet government. Even Frederick the Great had avoided selecting incapable Ministers for his tools.

[2] Juvenalis Satiræ, Sat. IV, lines 220–224:

Pone crucem servo; meruit quo crimine servus
Supplicium? quis testis adest, quis detulit? audi,
Nulla unquam de morte hominis cunctatio longa est.
O demens, ita servus homo est? nil fecerit, esto.
Hoc volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas.

possible to discover whether the contemporaries of Friedrich Wilhelm I gave him their approbation, as did posterity, because in his violent intervention he was free from any regard for the opinion of others, as his father had been. To-day the judgment of history has decided that the supreme law of his being was *salus publica*, not approbation.

Frederick the Great did not propagate his race; but his position in our early history must have worked upon each of his successors as a challenge to resemble him. He had two peculiar gifts, each of which enhanced the other: he had the qualifications of a commander-in-chief and a homely *bourgeois* understanding of the interests of his subjects. Without the first he would not have been in a position to make lasting use of the second, and without the second his military success would not have won him the recognition of posterity in such a degree as has been the case—although one may say of the European nations in general that that king is the most truly national and the most beloved who has won the bloodiest laurels for his country; sometimes even when he has lost them again through his own neglect. Charles XII obstinately led his Sweden toward the ruin of her powerful position, yet one finds his portrait in the houses of the Swedish peasants, as a symbol of Sweden's glory, more frequently than that of Gustavus Adolphus. A lover of peace, a benefactor to his people, and a civilizing agent does not as a rule influence the Christian nations of Europe so deeply and so inspiringly as

one who is ready to make victorious use of the blood and treasure of his subjects on the battlefield. Louis XIV and Napoleon, whose wars ruined the nation and in the end had little result, have remained the pride of the French, and the more homely services of other monarchs and governments remain thrust into the background. If I picture to myself the history of the European peoples, I find no instance in which honorable and self-sacrificing care for the peaceful prosperity of the nations has had a stronger power of attraction for the sympathies of the people than martial glory, victorious battles, and the conquest of even rebellious territories.

In contrast to his father, Friedrich II, under the influence of the changing period, and his intercourse with foreign scholars, felt a need of approbation which early betrayed itself in little things. In his correspondence with Count Seckendorff he sought to impress this ancient sinner by his sexual excesses and the maladies following thereupon, and his aggressive onslaught upon Silesia directly after his accession to the throne he himself described as the result of his longing for fame. He dispatched poems from the battlefield with the appended remark, "*Pas trop mal pour la veille d'une grande bataille*" ("Not so bad for the eve of a great battle"). But this longing for applause, this love of approbation, is in a sovereign a powerful and sometimes a profitable motive; when it is lacking the monarch is more than usually prone to lapse into epicurean inactivity. *Un petit roi*

d'Yvetot, se levant tard, se coucnant tôt, dormant fort bien sans gloire, does not conduce to the success of his country.

Would the world have lived to behold the "great" Frederick, or the heroic pledge of Wilhelm I if neither of these monarchs had felt the need of approbation? Ambition in itself is a mortgage which must be deducted from the capacity for work of the man who is incumbered by it, in order to arrive at the net profit which remains as the available sum of his talents. In the case of Frederick the Great genius and spirit were so lofty that they could not be depreciated by any excess of self-esteem, and his extravagant self-confidence, as in the case of Colin[1] and Kunersdorf,[2] the violence used toward the supreme court of judicature in Arnold's[3] trial, and the ill usage of Trenck, may all be swallowed without prejudicing the general opinion of this monarch. In Wilhelm I the consciousness that he was a Prussian officer and a Prussian king was extremely active, but the noble qualities of his heart, the trustworthiness and uprightness of his character, were great enough to bear the burden, the more so as his love of approbation was free from excessive self-esteem; on the contrary, his eminent modesty was as great as his sense of duty and his valor. The element which atoned for all the severities of character and behavior of our

[1] A battle fought on June 18, 1757.

[2] A battle fought on August 12, 1759.

[3] Arnold was the tenant of a watermill, whom Frederick the Great protected against pretended injustice.

earlier kings lay in their hearty and honorable good will toward their subjects and servants, and in their loyalty to both.

Frederick the Great's custom of interfering in the departments of his Ministers and his magistracy and in the circumstances of his subjects' lives sometimes hovered before His Majesty as an example. The inclination to make marginal notes in Frederick the Great's style, of a critical or peremptory nature, was during my administration so active that it resulted in official inconvenience, because the drastic contents and expression of these notes made it necessary to keep the annotated documents in the strictest secrecy. Representations which I made to His Majesty met with a far from gracious reception; meanwhile the result was that the marginal notes were no longer written on the edge of indispensable documents, but pasted to them. The less complicated Constitution and the smaller area of Prussia enabled Frederick the Great to obtain an easier survey of the general situation of the state, at home and abroad, so that for a monarch who had his experience of business, his inclination for solid work, and his clear insight, the practice of writing brief marginal instructions for the benefit of the Cabinet offered fewer difficulties than under modern conditions. The patience with which he informed himself before arriving at final decisions in legal or practical affairs, and listened to the opinion of competent and expert men of business, gave his marginal notes their business-like authority.

There are two directions in which Kaiser Wilhelm II shares in the inheritance of Friedrich Wilhelm II. One is the powerful sexual development, the other a certain susceptibility to mystical influences. As to the manner in which the Kaiser assures himself of the will of God, to whose service he devotes his activities, we can scarcely cite a classical witness. The intimations in the imaginative essay, "King and Minister: A Midnight Coversation," [1] concerning a "Book of Vows," and the miniatures of his three great predecessors, are by no means clear.

I find no similarity of appearance between Friedrich Wilhelm III and Wilhelm II. The former was shy and reserved, and had no inclination for exhibiting himself, nor did he strive after popularity. I remember at a review in Stargard, at the beginning of his thirtieth year, in connection with the ovations by which his ease in the midst of his Pomeranian subjects was disturbed, that at the moment when "*Heil Dir im Siegerkranz*," mingled with cries of "Hurrah," was being sung into his face at short range, he flew into a rage whose loud and energetic expression at once silenced the singers. Wilhelm I was not without his share of this paternal inheritance of self-conscious diffidence, and was painfully affected when the homage paid him overstepped the limits of good taste. Flattery *à brûle pourpoint* irritated him greatly; his reception of any expression of sympathetic loyalty was chilled for the time being by the impression of exaggeration or aggressiveness.

[1] *The Contemporary Review*, April, 1890, p. 457.

In common with Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the present Kaiser has the gift of eloquence and the need of employing it more frequently than is desirable. His words flow readily; but in the choice of them his great-uncle was more discreet and perhaps more laborious and scientific. In the case of the great-nephew the presence of a short-hand writer is not always desirable; but it was very seldom that a grammatical criticism could be brought against Friedrich Wilhelm's speeches. These latter were the eloquent and sometimes poetical expression of ideas which at that time would have been capable of stimulating men to action, had the words been followed by deeds to correspond. I very well remember the enthusiasm aroused by the Coronation Speech and the King's utterances upon other public occasions. If they had been followed by energetic resolutions of the same emphatic character, they might at that time have produced a powerful effect, all the more as people's feelings were not yet blunted in respect of political emotions. In the years 1841 and 1842 more was to be achieved with fewer means than in 1849. We can form an impartial judgment of those matters now that the then desirable object has been attained, and the need of 1840 is no longer present in the national mind; on the contrary, *Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien* is one of the soundest of proverbs, against which the Germans are theoretically more inclined to trespass than other nations. Wilhelm II resembled Friedrich Wilhelm IV in this, that the foundation of their

policy was rooted in the conception that the King, and he alone, is more closely acquainted with the will of God than other men, governs in accordance with the same, and therefore confidently demands obedience, without discussing his aim with his subjects or announcing it to them. Friedrich Wilhelm IV had no doubt of his specially privileged position in respect of the Deity; his honest belief corresponds with the picture of the high priest of the Jews, who *alone* stepped behind the curtain.

In certain respects we shall seek in vain for any resemblance between Wilhelm II and his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather; peculiarities which were the principal features of the characters of Friedrich Wilhelm III, Wilhelm I, and Friedrich III were not to the fore in the young sovereign. A certain timid distrust of their own capacity for work had, through the four generations, made way for a certain degree of assured self-confidence, such as we have not seen upon the throne since the time of Frederick the Great; but only, I think, in the person of the reigning sovereign. His brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, seems to possess the same distrust of his own powers and the same secret diffidence as are found, on closer acquaintance, at the bottom of the characters of Kaisers Friedrich and Wilhelm I, despite all their consciousness of their Olympian rank. In the latter his profound and pious trust in God was needed as surety, in the face of his unassuming and humble conception, before man and God, of his own personality, for the steadfastness of those resolutions which he

made manifest in the time of conflict. Both rulers atoned by their goodness of heart and their honest love of the truth for their occasional deviations from the current estimation of the practical influence of kingly birth and anointing.

If I seek to paint a portrait of the present Kaiser after the conclusion of my relations with his service, I find in him the characteristics of his predecessors incarnated in a manner which would for me possess a strong attractive power, and result in my attachment to his person, if they were animated by the principle of reciprocity between monarch and subject, between master and servant. The Germanic feudal law gives the vassal few pretensions save to the property of the subject, except that the fealty between him and his feudal lord is reciprocal, and the infraction of this fealty by either party is reckoned to be felony. Wilhelm I, his son, and his predecessors possessed the corresponding sentiment in a high degree; and this is the essential basis of the attachment of the Prussian people to their monarchs, which may be explained psychologically, for the tendency to bestow a *one-sided* affection has no existence as an *enduring* motive in the human soul. In the presence of Kaiser Wilhelm II, I could not get away from the impression of a one-sided affection; the feeling which is the firmest foundation of the constitution of the Prussian army, the feeling that the soldier will never leave the officer in the lurch, but also that the officer will never leave the soldier in the lurch, a sentiment to which Wilhelm I con-

THE GERMAN EMPEROR AND EMPRESS. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1899

formed in respect of his servants almost to exaggeration, cannot so far be recognized as entering, in any adequate degree, into the mentality of the young sovereign; his pretension to absolute sacrifice, confidence, and unshakable fealty has increased; and the inclination to guarantee a return of confidence and security on his own part has so far failed to make its appearance. The ease with which he dismisses trusted servants, even those whom he has hitherto treated as personal friends, without explanation of his motive, does not promote, but weakens, the spirit of confidence as it has prevailed for generations in the service of the kings of Prussia.

With the transition from the Hohenzollern spirit to the Coburg-English conception an imponderable factor was lost which will be difficult to restore. Wilhelm I protected and rewarded his servants, even when they were unfortunate or unskillful, possibly more than was profitable, and in consequence of this he had servants who were more attached to him than was profitable to themselves. In particular his warm-hearted good will toward others was unchangeable, if his gratitude for services performed came into play. He was always far from regarding his own will as the sole rule of conduct, nor could he contemplate the wounding of other people's feelings with indifference. His manner toward subordinates was always that of a royal and benevolent master, and alleviated the ill humor arising in the course of official business. Ill-natured gossip and calumny, when they came

to his ears, could obtain no hold upon his noble and upright nature, and place hunters whose only source of profit lay in the shamelessness of their flattery had no prospect of success with Wilhelm I. To backstairs influences and accusations against his servants he was insensible, even if they proceeded from people holding high positions about his person, and if he did take the matter imparted to him into consideration, this was done in open conversation with the person behind whose back it was meant to take effect. If his opinion differed from mine he expressed himself openly as differing from me, discussing the matter with me, and if I did not succeed in winning him over to my views I gave in when it was possible; if it was not possible I postponed the affair or let it drop for good. My independence as a political leader has been honestly overestimated by my friends, and for their own purposes by my adversaries, because I surrendered all hope of fulfilling desires to which the King had as a matter of conviction offered lasting resistance, without continuing to advocate them until they resulted in a dispute. What was attainable I took on account, and on my side it only came to a strike in cases where my personal sense of honor was involved, as in the affair of the *Reichsglocke*,[1] by the Kaiserin, or in the Usedom[2] affair, by Masonic influences; I have never been either a courtier or a Mason.

[1] An opposition newspaper started in 1870.

[2] Guido Count von Usedom, Prussian jurist and diplomatist; 1863–69, ambassador to the Italian court.

The Kaiser endeavors, by making concessions to his enemies, to make the support of his friends unnecessary. His grandfather, at the time of his accession to the Regency, endeavored to insure the general content of his subjects, without losing their obedience and thereby endangering the security of the state; but after four years' experience he recognized the errors of his advisers and of his wife, who assumed that the opponents of the monarchy would by liberal concessions be transformed into its friends and supporters. In 1862 he was inclined to abdicate rather than surrender further to parliamentary Liberalism, and accepted battle, supported by the latent but decisively stronger loyal elements.

The Kaiser, with his Christian, but not always (in the worldly sense) successful tendency to conciliation, began with his worst enemy, Social Democracy. This first mistake, which was embodied in the management of the strike of 1889, led to increased pretensions on the part of the Socialists and fresh ill humor on the part of the monarch, as soon as it became evident that under the new government, just as under the old, the monarch could not, with the best will in the world, change the nature of things and of the human race. The Kaiser was without experience in the sphere of human desires and human covetousness; but that he had lost his early confidence in the judgment and experience of others was a result of intrigues by which he was confirmed in his underestimation of the difficulty of governing, not only by officious

advisers, such as Hinzpeter, Berlepsch, Heyden, Douglas and other impudent flatterers, but also by place-hunting generals and aides, and colleagues to whom I was referred for support, such as Boetticher, who as Minister had no other function than to support me, and even by individual members of my Council, who immediately and willingly went over in secret to President von Berlepsch if the Kaiser questioned them behind the backs of their superiors. Perhaps he will suffer the same disillusion in respect of Social Democracy as his grandfather suffered in 1862 in respect of the progressives.

This policy of making advances to, not to say running after, the enemy, has been adopted by the Center, by Windthorst—only to have spoken to whom was seized upon by the Kaiser as one of the external causes of his breach with me—and whose official honors after my dismissal were increased to apotheosis after his death. A curious Prussian saint! It is to be feared that even these favored props of the monarchy will give way in the moment of need. At all events, the complete satisfaction of the confederates, which the Prussian monarchy and the Protestant Empire might find in the Center and the Society of Jesus, will prove to be just as unattainable as that of the Socialists, and in the event of danger and difficulty we shall see results not unlike those which followed the downfall of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, in connection with the mercenary soldiers, whom the Order was unable to pay. The Kaiser's inclination to employ antimonarchical and even anti-

A "PUNCH" CARTOON PUBLISHED A MONTH OR TWO AFTER BISMARCK'S DISMISSAL. THE KAISER IS SHOWN "ROCKING THE BOAT," WHICH HE SUBSEQUENTLY SUCCEEDED

Prussian elements, such as the Poles, in the service of the Crown, gave His Majesty a temporary means of bringing pressure to bear upon parties and factions which in principle were loyal to the antimonarchical tradition. The threat that if he were not unconditionally obeyed he would turn yet farther to the Left; that he might place the Socialists, the Crypto-Republicans of the Freethinkers' Party, and the Ultramontane forces at the helm: in a word, the *Acheronta movebo*, which was the distinctive trait of this running after irreconcilable opponents, intimidated the established supporters of the monarchy. They feared that "things might become even worse," and the Kaiser is to-day, as far as they are concerned, in the position of a ship's captain whose navigation arouses the apprehensions of the crew and who sits smoking a cigar over the powder barrel.

Even in the case of foreign countries, whether friendly or inimical or doubtful, amiability had been carried to a greater length than is compatible with the conception that we should feel secure by virtue of our own attractive force. There was no one, either in the Foreign Office or at court, who was sufficiently familiar with international psychology justly to calculate the effect of these political proceedings on our side; neither the Kaiser nor Caprivi nor Marschall was qualified to do so by his previous experience, and the political sense of honor of the Kaiser's advisers was satisfied by the Kaiser's signature, independently of the consequences to the Empire.

The attempt to win the liking of the French (Meissonier[1]), in the background of which the idea of a visit to Paris may have been slumbering, and the willingness once more to allow the right of thoroughfare through the boundary wall of the Vosges, had had no other result than that the French became bolder and the Statthalter more anxious. The Kaiser's announcement in the autumn of 1889 that he intended to pay a second visit to Russia in 1890—an announcement which was personally inconvenient to the Russian monarch—had disagreeable results. Our attitude toward England and Austria seemed to me equally incorrect. Instead of fostering the idea in these countries that even if the worst came to the worst we should not be lost without them, a system of gratuities was employed, which we found to be extremely costly, and which made us appear to be in need of help, whereas both our helpers needed it more than we did. England, if, owing to her lack of troops, she were threatened by France, or by Russia in India and the East, might find protection from either of these threats in the assistance of Germany. But if on our side more importance were attributed to England's friendship than England attributed to ours, then England's overestimation of herself with reference to us would be confirmed, as also the conviction that we should feel ourselves honored if, without any return services, we were allowed to burn our fingers in achieving England's aims. Even more certain,

[1] The artist.

in our relations with Austria, was the greater lack of need on our part, and it is not possible to see why, at the meeting in Silesia, we should have had to buy our otherwise secure reliance on reciprocal support by the promise of economic concessions or to confirm our need of such support. The saying that fusion of economic interests—that is, the favoring of Austrian at the cost of German interests—is a necessary result of our political intimacy, has reached me from Vienna in varying forms, for ten long years, and I have turned aside the underlying expectations without a blunt refusal, but also without giving way in the slightest degree, meeting them with friendly courtesy, until they were recognized to be hopeless even in Vienna, and were abandoned. But at Rohnstock[1] the Austrian expectations appear to have been so skillfully thrust into the foreground between the two Kaisers that the natural inclination to be agreeable to one's guest may have been the origin of the promise on our part which Kaiser Franz Joseph had *utiliter* accepted. In the following deliberations of the Ministers, moreover, the routine-trained business dexterity of the Austrians would in any case have gained an advantage over our novices and free-traders. It may be that my friend and colleague Kalnoky[1] would not have been a match for my successor in a military sense, but in the sphere of economic diplomacy he was his superior, although not fundamentally an expert.

[1] A town and royal hunting lodge in Silesia.

[2] Gustav Kalnoky (1832–98), Austrian diplomatist; 1881–95, Minister of the Interior.

A change in the personal relations between Wilhelm II and Alexander III had at first an effect upon the former's ill humor that was not to be observed without some apprehension.

In May, 1884, Prince Wilhelm was sent by his grandfather to Russia in order to congratulate the heir to the throne upon the attainment of his majority. His close relationship and the Tsar's veneration of his great-uncle assured him of a kindly reception and distinguished treatment, to which he was not at that time accustomed in his own family; instructed by his grandfather, he proceeded with circumspection and reserve; the impression was on both sides a gratifying one. In the summer of 1886 the Prince again went to Russia, in order to greet the Tsar, who was holding reviews in the Polish provinces, at Brest-Litovsk. Here he was received in an even more friendly fashion than during his first visit, and had the opportunity of expressing opinions which were to the Emperor's liking since his breach with Prince Alexander of Bulgaria had occurred, while the Russian influence in Constantinople had clashed with the English until the position became one of dangerous tension. The Prince, in his earliest youth, was prejudiced against England and all things English, and very much incensed against Queen Victoria; moreover, he would hear nothing of a marriage between his sister and one of the Battenbergs.[1] The Potsdam officers at

[1] Alexander Prince of Battenberg (1857–93) was from 1879 to 1886 Prince of Bulgaria.

that time used to tell of drastic expressions of the Prince's Anglophobe temper. It was natural to him, in the political conversation into which the Tsar drew him, to acquiesce fully in the latter's opinions, perhaps going even farther than the Tsar ventured to do. The impression that he had won the full confidence of Alexander III was possibly incorrect.

With the design of making political profit out of his relations with the Tsar, who, on returning from Copenhagen in November, 1887, broke his journey at Berlin, he traveled by night to meet the Tsar at Wittenberg. There the Tsar was still asleep, and the Prince just contrived to see him shortly before their arrival in Berlin, in the presence of a portion of his retinue. After dinner in the palace he remarked to a gentleman, as he was going downstairs with him, that he had had no opportunity of speaking to the Tsar of Russia. The discretion of the guest, who, if not as a result of previous observation, was at all events then in a position to explain that in Copenhagen the Tsar had been informed of the opinion of the Prince of Wales and the Guelph party, which at that time prevailed in the English royal family among the Queen's descendants, aroused a natural irritation in Prince Wilhelm, which was noted by his circle, and was increased and exploited by the officious military element, which at that time held that war with Russia was bound to come. The General Staff was so full of this idea that the General-Quartermaster,[1] Count Waldersee, dis-

[1] Head of the General Staff. (*Trans.*)

cussed it with the Austrian ambassador, Count Czechenyi. The latter reported on the conversation to Vienna, and not long afterward the Tsar asked the German ambassador, Von Schweinitz, "Why are you stirring up Austria against me?"

The arguments by which Prince Wilhelm had been influenced may be learned from a letter which he, having meanwhile become Crown Prince, wrote me on May 10, 1888, whose tenor I ascribe to the increasing influence of Count Waldersee, who considered the moment a favorable one for making war, and for claiming, for the General Staff, a more powerful influence over imperial politics.

BERLIN, *May 10, 1888.*

YOUR HIGHNESS,

I have read with great interest your letter of the 9th inst., but I think I am to gather from its contents that Your Highness attributes an exaggerated significance to my marginal notes to the Vienna report of the 28th of April, and that you have thereby gained the impression that I have become an opponent of our hitherto pacific and expectant policy, which Your Highness has directed with so much wisdom and prudence, and, it is to be hoped, will long continue to direct, for this would be a blessing to the Fatherland. For this policy I have repeatedly interceded—at St. Petersburg and Brest-Litovsk—and in all decisive questions have constantly, as is well known, taken Your Highness's part. What should have happened to make me suddenly change my opinion? My marginal notes, in which Your Highness thinks to recognize a call on my part for a modification of what has hitherto been our policy, were merely intended to hint that the political and *military* opinions concerning the necessity or expediency of this war—which military opinions I intended thereby to bring to your knowledge—have become divergent; and

that the military opinions, considered in themselves, are not without justification. I thought such a hint would be not without interest for Your Highness, but never that it would lead to the belief that I wished to subordinate policy to the desires of the military circle.

In order to obviate any mistaken conceptions and in partial recognition of the reasons urged by Your Highness I will in future abstain from making marginal notes on political reports, with the stipulation that at some other time I will bring my opinions with complete candor to Your Highness's knowledge.

I find myself compelled, by the importance of the questions raised by Your Highness, to go into this matter more closely.

I am absolutely of Your Highness's opinion that even with a fortunate outcome of a war with Russia we should not succeed in entirely destroying Russia's means of offense and defense, yet I believe that that country, after an unsuccessful war as a result of critical internal political conditions, would fall into quite a different state of impotence from that of any other European state, including France. I remember in this connection that after the Crimean War Russia was helpless for almost twenty years before she so far recovered her position that she was in a position to attack.[1]

France's combatant forces were *not* largely destroyed, for under the eyes, indeed with the help of the benevolent and victorious adversary, it was possible to create and shape a new army, in order to besiege the Commune and save the whole nation from ruin; the existing defenses of Paris in the hands of the victors were not demolished; they were not even dismantled; the fleet was left to a France which was not destroyed, but only politically humiliated. These facts just quoted prove that we, far from having really destroyed the enemy,[2] have preserved the nucleus of the enormous forces now threatening us on the part of the Republic, on land and by sea. This was mistaken from a military point of view, but politically was completely in accordance with

the situation of things in Europe and was at the moment correct.

The stronger the Republic grew the greater was the tendency shown by Russia—despite the most loyal behavior and intentions on the part of the Tsar—without having been in the least degree injured by Germany, merely to wait for the favorable moment to fall upon us in alliance with the Republic.[3] This threatening situation exists and continues, not after a war voluntarily undertaken by us against Russia, but because of the common interest of the Pan-Slavists and republican France in overthrowing Germany as the bulwark of the monarchy.

With this object both nations are systematically strengthening their combatant forces on the decisive frontiers, although this unseemly proceeding has not in any way been provoked by us, nor have they put forward any valid excuse for the same.

For this reason the wise policy of my late grandfather, directed by Your Highness, created alliances which have greatly contributed to our protection against the invasion of our *born* and hereditary enemy in the west. This policy also includes persuading the Russian ruler to favor us.[4] This influence will persist as long as the present Tsar really possesses the power to make his will effective; if that were lost—and there are many signs that it might be[5]—it is highly probable that Russia would allow herself to be separated from our born enemy no longer, in order to make war with her, if the combatant forces on both sides appeared sufficiently developed to destroy us with impunity.

In such circumstances the value of our allies is increased; to bind them to us[6] without allowing them any considerable influence in the Empire will be and must remain the great, and, I grant you, the difficult[7] task of a prudent German policy. But it must be remarked that a portion of these allies are of Romish stock and are provided with a machinery of government whose absolute security is not so fully guaranteed as with us. For this reason we are scarcely able to

count upon a longer alliance, and the war in whose defensive operations they will be called upon to co-operate had better be fought earlier than later.[8]

Our enemies will assuredly not neglect to make all sorts of attempts to isolate us, to alienate our allies from us; every mistake we commit, every weak point which the German policy has left uncovered, will assist such endeavors. Among such mistakes I must count any sort of protection given to the Battenbergs;[9] Austria[10] would regard this as an encroachment upon her special interests; and Russia would have the satisfaction of seeing us parted from our best ally; also you will realize that a war which had broken out on account of the Battenbergs could not be a popular, national war for Germany, for that *furor Teutonicus* which is so necessary in such a war would be absolutely lacking.

Russia would then easily be able to create conditions which would necessarily lead to war; but public opinion would certainly regard Germany as the originator of the war. I grant that the danger of war would thereby be accelerated; yet at what a cost? Far be it from me to strive to bring it nearer.[11] As the war against the *west* would be carried on within range of the eye, and as corresponding military preparations would be made, which, as Your Highness has pointed out, would promise far greater benefit in the west than in the east, the military authorities would be particularly grateful to *the policy* which, as soon as the war was recognized to be inevitable, would be in a position effectively to insure that it should be fought in the west.[12]

However, I am of the opinion that we shall have war on both sides, if we begin it in the *east;* France would refrain from attacking us only if she were passing through a particularly difficult domestic crisis, or if *military* difficulties should once more intervene, as it seems they certainly existed *last autumn* (disappointments over melinite, uselessness of the new rifle, and the crushing impression produced by the result of the firing of the outer fort at Jüterbogk). On the other hand, we cannot with absolute certainty foretell[14]

that if we were forced to go to war against France, Russi *eo ipso* would remain passive where we were concerned.

At any time, but most particularly under conditions suc as existed *last autumn*, it is the duty of the Great Genera Staff[15] to keep their eyes fixed sharply upon our own militar situation and that of our neighbors, so that they can carefull weigh the advantages and disadvantages which may offer i a *military* connection. The opinion thus formed, not c the policy to be followed, but of the *military* measures to b taken in the service itself, and conditioned by its positio at the moment, must be brought to the knowledge of th political leader[16] by the head of the General Staff with com plete candor and with strict reference to the military stand point. Herein resides, in my opinion, an absolutely necessar aid to the direction of even the most pacific policy.[17]

I should like to be sure that my ominous marginal note to the report of the 28th of April were understood in thi sense. They were meant at the same time to hint tha although the German policy must be directed in a manne best calculated to insure peace, the military authorities o Germany and Austria should, in duty, and with the fulles right, have *called attention* in the autumn of last year to th *favorable*[18] *military* opportunity for a warlike procedur which offered itself to both countries.[19]

In spite of my marginalia, which caused so much agita tion, I should yet like to be convinced that Your Highnes in the event of a possibly imminent change of governmen will be in a position, with the best of consciences, and wit the same certainty as hitherto, to afford us a prospect of th peaceful attitude on the part of our German policy.[20]

WILHELM,

Crown Prince of the German Empire and of Prussia.

Notes, amplifications, etc., of the Imperial Chancellor's in respect of t foregoing letter: (1) *In the margin:* Waldersee. (2) *In the margin:* 40 mi lions! And Europe? (3) To fall upon us *put in brackets; a note of interr gation over it, as in the margin, and in the latter:* To win the Bosporu (4) *Sentence underlined, and a line in the margin.* (5) *Note of interrogatio* (6) *In the margin:* In these words assuredly lay the embryo of the Co

On June 15, 1888, the Crown Prince became Kaiser. Just a week later I heard indirectly of an imperial utterance to the effect that the Kaiser was most unpleasantly affected by various articles in the Berlin newspapers, in particular by an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* evening edition of the 20th of June and another in the *Berliner Zeitung* and the *Berliner Presse* of the 21st of June, which appeared to be written to arouse the belief that there was a dispute between His Majesty and the Imperial Chancellor in connection with Count Waldersee—that is, that there was already friction in the authoritative governmental circles in connection with recent appointments. They were repeatedly and publicly blamed for the same thing during the reign of Kaiser Friedrich; His Majesty was afraid that the foreign press would comment upon these articles, and on this account was anxious that the government press should be correctly informed as to the state of affairs, so that it might assume a defensive position in respect of the press attacks alluded to. The Kaiser ended, as he began, with the same point of view as that which he had unfolded in May—that

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mercial Treaty of 1891. (7) *Note of interrogation.* (8) better . . . later *underlined, note of interrogation after* earlier *and note of exclamation in the margin.* (9) The Battenbergs *underlined, note of exclamation and line in margin.* (10) *Note of interrogation.* (11) from me *underlined, and over it:* But Waldersee? (12) *Note of interrogation.* (13) *After* it *in brackets over the line:* only this? (14) we . . . foretell *underlined, and in the margin* certainly not, yet would rather do this than the reverse! (15) of the Great General Staff *doubly underlined and over it:* Waldersee. (16) political *to* Staff *underlined.* (17) *Amplification:* Waldersee's policy! if *he* were to direct it! and who is to be Chancellor? (18) favorable *doubly underlined; in the margin notes of exclamation and interrogation.* (19) *Two notes of interrogation.* (20) *Between text and signature:* it would be a misfortune if——

he never allowed Count Waldersee an unjustified influence over foreign policy, in spite of his esteem for him; and that no court camarilla would exist under his government; much more was he convinced that no parties existed among the persons to whom he had given his confidence, and who were serving him, but that all were following him on the path which led to the goal which he recognized as the right one.[1]

From the 19th to the 24th of July the Kaiser was on a visit to Peterhof. The impressions which he left behind him there did not fully come to my knowledge until a later period. They are alluded to on p. 100. That he himself introduced a discordant note into our policy first became perceptible in two incidents which occurred in the June of the following year, while I was in Varzin.

Count Philip Eulenburg, our diplomatic representative in Oldenburg, was to a notable degree in His Majesty's favor, by reason of his social gifts, and was frequently summoned to court. He confided to my son that the Kaiser regarded my policy as pro-Russian, and asked whether my son or I myself would not endeavor, by means of interviews and explanatory statements, to alter His Majesty's opinion. My son asked, what was meant by pro-Russian? Political actions which were *too* friendly to the Russians—that is, injurious to our own policy—should be pointed out to him. Our foreign policy is a carefully thought out and carefully manipulated whole, which the amateur

[1] See Appendix III, p. 195.

A SUPPRESSED PHOTOGRAPH OF THE KAISER TAKEN WHEN HE WAS EXPERIMENTING WITH A BEARD

and military politicians who whisper in His Majesty's ear do not perceive. If His Majesty has no confidence in us, and allows himself to be deceived by intriguers, then, in God's name, let him allow me and my son to go our ways; he has, with the clearest conscience and to the best of his ability, co-operated in my policy, and sacrificed his health amid the unendurable squabbles of which he was always the central point. If he still wishes to carry out a policy of "harmony," he will succeed more easily to-day than to-morrow. Count Eulenburg, who may have expected a different answer, broke off here with the urgent request that his remarks should go no farther; he must have expressed himself very awkwardly.

A few days later, while the Shah of Persia was visiting Berlin, the Kaiser informed my son that the press must write against the new Russian loan; he did not wish still more German gold to go to Russia in return for Russian paper, since the money was used only for military equipment and armaments. One of his generals of high rank—as was ascertained during the day, it was General von Verdy, the Minister of War—had just called his attention to this danger. My son replied that the matter was not as stated; it was merely a question of the conversion of an earlier Russian loan, and of the best opportunity which offered itself to the German investors of accepting ready money and getting rid of Russian paper, which in the event of war would perhaps pay no interest to Germany. The Russians also wanted to make a

profit, paying a smaller percentage on a given loan in the future; the gold market was favorable, and therefore the matter should not be postponed. The French would take the Russian paper which we returned; the business would be carried out in Paris. His Majesty insisted that articles must appear in the German press attacking this financial operation, and he had arranged for a meeting of the council of the Foreign Office in order to instruct it accordingly. My son said that if he had not succeeded in informing His Majesty of the state of affairs, he would have asked that he might be allowed to make a report from the Ministry for Finance; for semiofficial articles of this kind could not be written without hearing what the Imperial Chancellor had to say, since they would influence the general policy of the Empire. His Majesty thereupon induced my son to write to me urgently that he wished a press campaign to be undertaken against the Russian loan, and had the representative of the then absent Minister for Finance informed by the aide-de-camp that the Senior Board of the Stock Exchange must be instructed to prohibit the loan.

I, myself, some months later, received a proof of His Majesty's temper in the shape of an incident which could not be passed over (see p. 56), and may be recapitulated here for the sake of coherence. When the Tsar's visit to Berlin in October, 1881, had come to a close, and I was driving back with the Kaiser from the Lehrter railway station, to which we had accompanied the Tsar, who was

traveling to Ludwigslust, he told me that he had seated himself, at Hubertusstock, on the box of the drag, giving up to his guest the full enjoyment of the hunt, and concluded with the words, "Now I think you will praise me!" After I had satisfied this demand he continued to tell me that he had done more; he had announced that he would pay the Russian Emperor a longer visit, part of which he proposed to spend with him at Spala. I ventured to doubt whether this would be welcome to the Tsar; he is fond of quiet and seclusion, and his life with his wife and children; Spala is too small a hunting lodge, and not arranged for visits. I reflected that both the royal persons would be unable to avoid the closest intercourse, and in the intimate conversations which would be held during so long a period there might be a danger of touching upon sensitive points.

I took it upon myself to do what I could to prevent this visit. The difference of character and mentality in the two monarchs was perhaps known to no contemporary so well as to myself; and this knowledge made me fear that a longer companionship might lead, without any effective control, to friction, dislike, and ill humor, and that the latter, in the Tsar, might already have been aroused by the idea of a more protracted disturbance of his solitude, even though he had naturally accepted his host's announcement of his visit with courtesy. In the interest of the understanding between the two Cabinets I thought it a ticklish matter to bring the suspicious defensive-

ness of the Tsar and the aggressive amiability of our sovereign into close and protracted contact without necessity, the more so as the advances were made in an insinuating manner, which was hardly applicable to our Russian policy, and still less to the distrustful self-esteem of the Tsar. How well founded my anxieties were will be seen on p. 100, where I speak of the secret reports from Petersburg, which, even assuming that they were exaggerated or falsified, must have been written with a knowledge of the situation.

The Kaiser was disagreeably affected by my opinion where he had expected approbation, and set me down in front of my dwelling instead of coming in with me for a further chat over official affairs.

The visit which the Kaiser paid the Tsar from the 17th to the 23d of August in Narva and Peterhof led to the increased personal aversion which I had feared.

Narva was followed by the meeting at Rohnstock and the commercial treaty with Austria. His Majesty's leaning toward England had been furthered on the English side with skillful calculation since the visit to Osborne at the beginning of August, 1889, and had led to the treaty relating to Zanzibar and Heligoland. The uniform of the Admiral of the Fleet may be regarded as the symbol of the end of a chapter of the Empire's foreign policy.

CHAPTER XI

THE TREATY RELATING TO HELIGOLAND AND ZANZIBAR

That the Treaty of Heligoland was a disappointing business for us, as was that between Glaucus and Diomedes, is now the opinion of other circles than those in which our overseas possessions were the prevailing interest. In the official justification of this affair the compensation which was invisible to the naked eye was sought rather in the sphere of things imponderable, in the fostering of our relations with England. Reference has been made to the fact that I, while I was in office, had set a high value on these relations. This is undoubtedly correct, but I had never believed in the possibility of a lasting guaranty of the same, and I should never have aimed at the sacrifice of a German possession in order to gain a good will whose duration would have had no prospect of surviving an English Ministry. The policy of every great Power will always be subject to modification by changing events and interests, but in addition to this the English nation is subject to the change which has to be made, every five or ten years on an average, in the personal constitution of the

House of Commons and the Ministry. The task that lay before me was to help to strengthen the well-disposed Salisbury Ministry, as far as that was possible, by demonstrations of sympathy. But as for seeking to purchase the good will or the continuation of an English Ministry with lasting sacrifices, the English Cabinets are too short lived and too little dependent upon their relations with Germany; its relations with France and Russia, and even with Italy and Turkey, are, as a rule, of greater importance to an English Ministry.

But the renunciation of equal privileges in the commercial city of Zanzibar was a lasting sacrifice for which Heligoland guaranteed no equivalent. Free trade with that one great market on the East African coast was our connecting link with the mainland, which to-day we can neither dispense with nor replace. That this means of communication would at some future time devolve upon us as exclusively as we have delivered it over to the English I had regarded, owing to the progress which German influence had made in the last four years before 1890, not as certain, but as probable enough for such an aim to be regarded not as a necessity in our plans for the future, but as a possibility worth taking trouble over. I was guided in this by the conviction that England's friendship was indeed of great value to us, but that Germany's friendship was in the circumstances of yet greater value to England. If England—and this did not lie beyond

the natural development of politics—were seriously threatened by France, then only Germany could help her; without our permission France could not profit by even a momentary superiority at sea, and India as well as Constantinople could be defended against the Russian peril more easily on the Polish than on the Afghan frontier. Situations like that in which Wellington at Belle-Alliance[1] said or thought, "I wish it were evening or that the Prussians would arrive," may readily be recalled, in the development of the greater European politics, as the historical moments in respect of which the practical proof of England's friendship is present to the recollection. In the Seven Years' War that friendship was refused at the time when we needed it most urgently, and at the Congress of Vienna a seal would have been set upon it in conformity with the treaty with France and Austria had not the return of Napoleon from Elba shifted the scenes of the political stage in a surprising fashion. England is one of those dexterous Powers with whom it is not only impossible to form any lasting alliance, but who cannot be relied upon with any certainty, because in England the basis of all political relations is more changeable than in any other state; it is the product of elections and the resulting majorities. Only a treaty brought to the knowledge of Parliament guarantees some security against sudden transformations, and even this security, to my thinking, has lost much of its value since the

[1] June 18, 1815.

ingenious interpretation which the treaty of May 11, 1867, relating to the neutrality of Luxemburg was given at the hands of England.

While in my opinion Germany's friendship is more secure, for the nation that wins it, than England's, I also believe that if the German policy is rightly directed England will all the sooner be in such a position that she will feel the practical need of our friendship as we feel the need of hers. By rightly directed I mean that we must not neglect to cultivate our relations with Russia because we feel ourselves to be protected against Russian aggression by the present Triple Alliance. Even if this protection were unshakable in its solidity and duration, we should, nevertheless, have no right and no reason to bring nearer to the German people, for the sake of English or Austrian interests in the east, the heavy and unfruitful burden of a Russian war, unless it were incumbent upon us in pursuance of genuinely German interests, and in defense of the integrity of Austria. In the Crimean War we were expected to fight England's warlike vassal Indian princes. Is the stronger German Empire more dependent than Friedrich Wilhelm IV then proved himself to be? Perhaps only more complaisant? But at the expense of the Empire.

Caprivi's tendency to foist upon me the responsibility for hazardous political measures, which he undoubtedly put forward at the command of a superior, was not precisely a proof of political honesty; nor was the attempt to ascribe to me

the treaty relating to Zanzibar. On February 5, 1891, he said in the Reichstag (Shorthand Reports, 1331):

> I will nevertheless consider one reproach which has repeatedly been brought against us—namely, that Prince Bismarck would hardly have been responsible for this cession. The present government has been compared with the previous one, and the comparison was to our disadvantage. Now I should have been absolutely disloyal if, when I entered upon this office and took over such transactions, even if my predecessor had not been the important personality that he was, I had not seen for myself what sort of transactions were going forward and what the government was engaged in, and what sort of a standpoint it had taken up. That was a perfectly obvious duty, and you may believe that I fulfilled this duty most zealously.

How he had obtained his information I do not know. If it was by reading the minutes of transactions, he could not have read in these minutes that I had advised the Zanzibar treaty. The proposition that England was of greater importance to us than Africa—which had occasionally been advanced in connection with overhasty and extravagant colonial projects—may under certain circumstances be as pertinent as the statement that Germany is of greater importance to England than East Africa; but it was not so at the time when the Heligoland treaty was concluded. It had by no means occurred to the English to demand or to expect of us the renunciation of Zanzibar; on the contrary, in England people were becoming familiarized with the idea that German

trade and influence were increasing there, and would finally obtain the upper hand. The English in Zanzibar itself were convinced, at the first news of the treaty, that there was a mistake; they could not imagine for what reason we could have made such a concession. It was not the case that we had to choose between retaining one of our African possessions and a rupture with England; and it was not the need of maintaining peace with England, but the desire of possessing Heligoland and of being complaisant to England that explained the conclusion of the treaty. The possession of this rock satisfies our sense of nationality; at the same time it means either a diminution of our national security against a superior French fleet or the necessity of turning Heligoland into a Gibraltar. Hitherto, in the event of a French blockade of our coasts, Heligoland would have been protected by the British flag and could not have been used by the French as a coaling station and a food store. But this will happen if in the next French war the island is protected neither by an English fleet nor by adequate fortifications. Considerations of this sort which had become audible in the press, really had to be refuted, as Caprivi said in the Reichstag on November 30, 1891:

> England has requirements in many parts of the world, has possessions all over the globe, and after all it might not have been very difficult for England to find an illusory object which would have been welcome to her and for which she might well have been disposed to surrender the island

I should like for once to have seen the storm of indignation—and in this case I should have held it to be justified—if in the course of a year or so, or shortly before the outbreak of a future war, the English flag on Heligoland had been hauled down, and one less friendly had appeared before our harbors.

Did he himself really believe this?

It is further worthy of remark that in his speech of February 5, 1891, there is a contradiction which casts a doubt upon the speaker's conviction of the credibility of his own arguments. If he had regarded the treaty as intrinsically and objectively useful, he would not have attempted by risky arguments to attribute the responsibility for it to his predecessor; he would not have found it necessary to seek to share with me the merit of an advantageous transaction, and with this object to search the records of the department for expressions of mine which, taking into consideration time, occasion, association, and destination, had not the significance which was attributed to them. In his speech of November 30, 1891, he had no longer any need to foist part of the responsibility upon me; he declared, "A year has sufficed to show how rightly we have acted in this matter."

CHAPTER XII

COMMERCIAL TREATY WITH AUSTRIA

THE attempt to exploit the intimate political relations in which Austria stands toward us, by virtue of the traditions and the development of Germany, for the winning of economic privileges was first made, as has been mentioned in a previous volume, in the time of Prince Schwarzenberg,[1] in the shape of an endeavor to establish a customs union, and was later repeated on various occasions. At the very outset it has always been frustrated by the impossibility of finding a correct standard of distribution of the revenues resulting from the dutiable consumption of the interested populations. The recognition of the impossibility of a complete customs union has not been able to suppress the natural endeavor to secure ourselves advantages by means of a commercial treaty. The weakening of the monarchical power and the need of votes in parliament increase the importance of the covetousness of certain classes of voters. The Hungarian half of the Empire had acquired an excessive significance during the last decade, and the Galician vote is of greater im-

[1] Felix Prince von Schwarzenberg (1800–52): from 1848, Austrian Prime Minister.

portance than formerly, not only in respect of parliamentary majorities and foreign eventualities. The agrarian greed of the eastern portion of the Empire has acquired a considerable influence over the resolutions of the government, and if the latter is in a position to satisfy its inordinate desires by its complaisance at the cost of Germany, and in virtue of Germany's inexperience, it will naturally exploit every unskillful advance on the part of German policy, in order to aggravate our domestic difficulties and to win over the agrarian party of Hungary and Galicia. The cost of all this, in so far as it is not defrayed by Germany's good nature, will have to be reimbursed by the industrial rather than the agrarian elements of cis-Leithania less Galicia. These elements are less dangerous to Austrian policy, and less capable of opposition than the malcontents of Poland and Hungary would be. The Germans are more submissive to their rulers and less adroit in the sphere of domestic politics than the other nationalities of Austria, as was demonstrated by the doctrinaire course of the constitutional campaign, which was directed by a party[2] of academicians, parliamentarians, and Ministers who never did anything at the right time, against the strongest and most natural allies of the Germans, against their own dynasty, until the breach occurred.

It is explicable that the economic policy of the

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[1] That part of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy lying on the nearer side of the river Leitha. (*Trans.*)

[2] The *Herbstzeitlosen*, as Bismarck called them.

Danubian Empire has less regard for the German industrial population than for the non-German agrarian population. Even in the Bohemian schism Czechdom was more strongly represented on the agrarian and the Germans on the industrial side. That it afforded the Hungarians, Poles, and Czechs a lively satisfaction when their interests were given the first place, and the Germans, first of all in cis-Leithania, but particularly in the German Empire, had to pay the score, is not to be wondered at; although we are certainly bound to ask ourselves how the German imperial government came to offer to abandon the German agrarian interests in Vienna. The reason given as valid in the press, that the political alliance must necessarily result in a process of economic fusion, is an empty phrase which signifies practically nothing. We have enjoyed the greatest political intimacy with Russia, and in the past with England, when our mutual fiscal relations have been very refractory, and the German Federal Treaty, too, even though it was not paid for by a customs union, has existed for a long time with full reciprocal confidence as regards its political stipulations. Our treaty of alliance with Austria also is in no danger of abrogation because we decline to-day to pay an economic tribute to Austria-Hungary for eventual military assistance, as forty years ago. If we picture to ourselves the future of Austria we see that she needs an alliance with Germany more than Germany needs an alliance with her. The substitute for Germany's friendship which

Austria might find in Russia's could be obtained only by abandoning all her efforts in the east, which have made Hungary Russia's adversary. Austria's dependence upon France and even upon the united western powers of the Crimean League would assign to the Austrian monarchy the most exposed position of all those taking part in a war against Russia and Germany, and would mean a surrender to the Russian efforts to develop the pro-Slavish seeds of destruction which are to be found among the numerically greater half of the population. For Austria the German alliance, based upon racial sympathies, is always the most natural and least dangerous; it may be said to be an ever-recurring need of Austria's in all situations.

I should think it a lamentable thing if the German Empire were to abandon the alliance with Austria, which I won by hard fighting, and should again seek to retain a perfectly free hand in respect of its European relations. But if our political affection for Austria proves to be unreturned unless we give practical proof of it by economic sacrifices, I should, of course, prefer a free hand in political matters, as I am convinced that our alliance, if it is conceived and maintained by Austria in the above-mentioned spirit, cannot be lasting and in decisive moments will not be tenable. The best alliances fail to render the services which are expected of them when they are concluded, if the moods and the convictions in which they were created, at the time of the

casus fœderis, are extinct; and if the conviction already prevails among the Austro-Hungarian Agrarians that our alliance is valueless, I fear that our treaty will be no more effective, when the day of reckoning comes, than were those of 1792 to 1795—the more so in that the conviction has in the meantime become firmly established in Germany that our treaty of alliance was accompanied by a commercial treaty, which is equivalent to the payment of tribute on the part of Germany, and that this payment for the maintenance of an alliance which is more necessary to Austria than to us is based upon promises which the leading statesmen of Austria, in virtue of their riper experience and more expert knowledge of affairs of the kind, obtained from the representatives of the German interests in convivial intercourse with them in Silesia and Vienna.[1] It is possible that the German guests in Vienna, in the hope of valuable political and commercial "tips," were given an even more friendly reception than would otherwise have been the case; but the revision of the German calculations by the public opinion of the nation will nevertheless follow, even if

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[1] A communication received from Berlin by the *Pesther Lloyd* reminds us of the recognized fact that the beginnings of the Commercial Treaty go back to the Rohnstock Conference of 1890, with the additional information that the new Chancellor, immediately after he had taken office, had the course which he was to follow in his commercial policy dictated to him by the highest personage in the Empire. The *Münchener Allgemeine Zeitung* makes the following comment: "This would justify the often published assumption that the real author of this change of commercial policy is Herr Miquel, and that the change dates from the Kaiser's visit to Frankfurt in November, 1889." (*Börsenzeitung*, December 16, 1891.)

years must elapse first. Perhaps at an inconvenient moment when, looking back upon the loss which we have suffered, the opinion will make itself felt that we have been suffering from Austria's highly profitable interference in our domestic legislation.[1]

The way in which the superior, man-of-the-world experience of Prince Schwarzenberg was employed by Austria, at Olmütz and the Dresden Conference, against the then representatives of Prussia, contributed essentially to bring about a situation which could finally no longer be resolved by the method of friendly partnership.

Concerning the blunders which had been made in our foreign policy public opinion is, as a rule, first enlightened when it is in a position to look back upon the history of a generation, and the *Achivi qui plectuntur* are not always immediately contemporary with the mistaken actions. The task of politics lies in forming as correct an anticipation as possible of what other peoples will do under given circumstances. The qualification for forming this anticipation is seldom innate to such a degree that it does not require, before it can be effective, a certain amount of professional experience and personal knowledge, and I cannot avoid certain disquieting impressions when I consider to what an extent these attributes have been lost by our leading circles. At all events, they

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[1] Financial damage, surrender of customs dues, to the extent of 40 million marks yearly; Center, Poles, Socialists—friends of Caprivi's.

are at the moment more abundantly in evidence in Vienna than with us, and on this account the apprehension is justified that the interests of Austria are more successfully safeguarded on the conclusion of treaties than are our own.

APPENDICES

I

THE CROWN PRINCE FRIEDRICH WILHELM TO BISMARCK

(See p. 31)

MORRIS CASTLE, ISLE OF WIGHT,
August 17, 1881.

I turn to you with the question, what does the newspaper rumor, "Baden ought to be a kingdom," really portend?

At first, like many others, I was amused by this *canard* and laughed at the announcement as a jest of the "silly season."

But the thing is continually repeated. I begin to grow suspicious.[1] I have, to be sure, too good an opinion of my brother-in-law, and at the same time too great a confidence in his German sentiments, to regard it as possible that he should meddle with such folly. But this being so, where does the newspaper rumor come from?[1]

You know what I think about the three German kingdoms which we received in the most disgraceful period of Napoleon I, in order that the dismemberment of Germany might forever be established thereby. From your own experience you know better than I what difficulties, indeed what daily provocations, these Cabinets, filled with empty titles, oppose to the welfare of the Empire. Are we perhaps to put up with yet another crown which will increase these difficulties? Does not this mean a yet farther degradation of monarchical authority already sufficiently weakened nowadays, while a small state is promoted, which by itself can do nothing, and

[1] Marginal remark of Bismarck's: Roggenbach.

is not in a position to endow a kingly display with either power or validity! But before all we should have to justify ourselves to the German people, in that we wantonly allowed such an obstacle to arise in the path of unity, which is establishing itself only with the extremest deliberation.

I am expressing myself as openly as I would if we two were alone in your room in Berlin. But should anything be afoot—which Heaven forbid—you are hereby authorized to announce that my reply to this matter of creating a King of Baden is a categorical "No." But then I beg to be immediately informed of the position of this affair, so that I can intervene in the matter effectively, as I expect that no conclusions will be arrived at before I have been given a hearing.

Schlözer ought to be back from Rome, and it would interest me to learn what his impressions are, and whether anything can be attempted as a result of his stay there.

I leave London on the 23d, shall be in Brussels on the 25th, in Coblenz on the 25th, in Frankfort on the 27th, and from the 28th to the 30th in Bavaria, whence I return to Berlin on the 1st of September.

It is to be hoped that your holiday at Kissingen has brought you recovery and strength, and will before all make you forget your sufferings in the spring. Here Parliament is in the throes of the suspense and anxiety of the Land bill, which is recognized as a necessary evil, but which may avert yet greater disorder in Ireland in the coming winter. Some of the Lords have abstained from voting; they have disappeared on board their yachts or gone after the grouse; others speak against the bill, but none the less vote in favor of it.

We have been thriving both on and in the sea in this glorious country, which I leave to visit first the Bavarians, then the Hanoverians, then the West Prussians, and finally the Schleswig-Holsteiners, curious to see whether the "pearl Von Meppen," the Minister in Brunswick, will really be a credit to the Guelphish "agitation"?

Your truly devoted,

FRIEDRICH WILHELM, CROWN PRINCE.

II

MINUTES OF THE MINISTERIAL SESSION OF MARCH 17, 1890

(See p. 97)

BERLIN, *March 17, 1890.*

Confidential Deliberations of the Prussian Cabinet.[1]

Present:

The president of the Cabinet,[2] and Imperial Chancellor, Prince von Bismarck.

The vice-president of the Cabinet, Secretary of State[3] von Boetticher.

The Secretary of State of Prussia, Von Maybach; Dr. Freiherr Lucius von Ballhausen, Dr. von Gossler, Dr. von Scholz, Count von Bismarck-Schönhausen, Herrfurth, Dr. von Schelling, Von Verdy, Freiherr von Berlepsch.

The Under-Secretary of State Acting Privy Councilor Homeyer.

The Minister-president[4] convened the Cabinet to a confidential meeting at his official residence and advised the same that he has to-day addressed to His Majesty the Kaiser and King a petition to be relieved of his offices, the acceptance of which is probable. He cannot but question whether he can still accept the responsibility, which is constitutionally incumbent upon him, for His Majesty's policy, since His Majesty's co-operation, which is indispensable to such acceptance, will not be conceded to him.

[1] *Staatsministerium.* (*Trans.*)
[2] Prime Minister. (*Trans.*)
[3] *Staatsminister.* (*Trans.*)
[4] Prime Minister. These equivalents are necessarily approximate. (*Trans.*)

He has already been surprised that His Majesty has formed definitive resolutions in respect of the so-called protection of labor legislation without previously consulting him and the Cabinet. He immediately expressed his apprehension that this proceeding would arouse great agitation in the country at election time, and awaken expectations in the electors which could not be fulfilled, and finally, by the chimerical nature of the hopes aroused, would operate to the detriment of the respect entertained for the Crown. He had hoped that the unanimous remonstrances of the Ministry might induce His Majesty to abandon the designs which he cherished; however, he had not found this unanimity in the Ministry, but was forced to conclude that in several quarters it had been considered advisable to acquiesce in His Majesty's suggestion.

Again, after this he was compelled to feel doubtful whether he still possessed the secure authority as Prime Minister that he had enjoyed in virtue of the confidence vouchsafed him in his time by His Majesty Kaiser Wilhelm I. Now the Kaiser discusses matters without him, not only with individual Ministers, but even with councilors of the Ministries subordinate to him. The Minister of Commerce has delivered memoranda to His Majesty without previously consulting him. In the interests of the unanimity of the Ministry as a body he brought to the notice of the last-named Minister the royal order of the 8th of September, 1852, which was unknown to him, and after he had convinced himself, in the course of the Cabinet meeting of the 2d of this month, that the Ministers generally were not all aware of this order, he had a copy of it sent to all, and in the accompanying letter he laid stress upon the fact that he applied the order only to memoranda or reports submitted to His Majesty, which aimed at the modification of legislation and the existing legal situation.

Tactfully handled in this manner, the instructions of the said order comprise no more than is indispensable to any Prime Minister who wishes to fill this position in a fitting

manner. He does not know from what quarter His Majesty learned of this proceeding, but His Majesty commanded that the said order, by which the Ministers were forbidden to present memoranda or reports directly to him, should no longer be in force. He explained that the Ministers were not subjected to restraint thereby; that at most it resulted in his being present at audiences. His Majesty is then always free to decide in favor of the departmental Minister and against the Prime Minister. The order is necessary, and least of all can he deny this now that he has just drawn attention to the matter.

This difference of opinion in itself would not have induced him to resign, still less would he have resigned on account of the labor question. In this province he has honestly done his best to support the imperial initiative, and to demonstrate, by diplomatic advocacy and by receiving the International Conference on his official premises, that he was promoting the labors of the Conference.

His Majesty the Kaiser has given him a further sign of a lack of confidence in the reproach that he, without His Majesty's permission, should not have received the deputy Windthorst. He receives all deputies as a matter of principle, and after Windthorst had requested an interview he had him admitted, with the result that he is now completely informed concerning the deputy's intentions. He could not submit to His Majesty's control over his personal intercourse in and out of service.

He is confirmed in his resolution to resign all his offices now that he has to-day convinced himself that he can no longer represent even His Majesty's foreign policy.

Notwithstanding his confidence in the Triple Alliance, he has none the less never lost sight of the possibility that it might at some time be renounced. In Italy the monarchy does not stand upon a firm footing; the concord between Italy and Austria is imperiled by the Irredenta; and in Austria, despite the absolute reliability of the reigning Emperor, a different frame of mind might supervene; Hun-

gary's attitude can never safely be relied upon; Hungary and Austria might engage in disputes from which we should have to stand aloof; on this account he has always endeavored to avoid breaking down the bridge between ourselves and Russia; and he believes that he has so far confirmed the Tsar in peaceful intentions that he has scarcely any fear of a Russian war, by which nothing could be gained even if it ran a victorious course. At most we might be attacked from that side if in a victorious war against France we sought to enforce the cession of territory by the latter. Russia needs the existence of France as a great Power as we need that of Austria.

Now the German consul in Kieff sent in fourteen exhaustive reports, making in all a good two hundred pages, concerning the Russian situation, many of which dealt with military measures. Of these reports he (Bismarck) submitted a few of a political nature to His Majesty; others, of a military nature, to the Great General Staff, in the expectation that the latter would lay them before the Kaiser, in case they were of a character to require his attention, while the rest he returned in order that they might be brought forward in the ordinary course of procedure (p. 106).

Concerning these reports he received the following autograph letter from His Majesty:

> The reports make it as clear as possible that the Russians are strategically fully prepared to go to war—and I must greatly deplore the fact that I have received so few of the reports. You ought to have drawn my attention long ago to the terrible danger threatening! It is more than high time to warn the Austrians and to take counter-measures. In such circumstances I can of course no longer think of a journey to Krasnö.
>
> The reports are excellent.
>
> [Signed] W.

In this letter the reproach is made that he has withheld reports from His Majesty and has not in due time called His Majesty's attention to the danger of war; further, the opinion is expressed, which he does not share, that a "terrible" danger threatens us from Russia, that Austria must be

warned and counter-measures taken, and finally that the Kaiser's visit to the Russian maneuvers, to which he had invited himself, must be abandoned.

It is not, as a general thing, incumbent upon him to lay all reports which reach him before His Majesty; he has the right to select, according to their contents, those in respect of which he thinks he can vouch for the impression which they will produce upon His Majesty. In the present instance he made a selection to the best of his judgment, and can but perceive in this letter an undeserved and mortifying lack of confidence.

Moreover, he is unable, in the face of his still unshaken opinion of the Tsar's peaceful intentions, to advocate such measures as His Majesty demands.

In this connection he hears that His Majesty the Kaiser, who previously approved of his proposals concerning the position to be taken up as regards the Reichstag, and the eventual dissolution of the latter, is now of the opinion that the military proposals should be introduced only in so far as one can count upon their acceptance. The Minister of War has recently expressed himself in favor of the introduction of these proposals in their complete form, and if it is desired to take counter-measures against the warlike preparations of Russia, and if danger is seen to be approaching from that direction, this is all the more the right course to take.

After what has been said he assumes that he is no longer in full agreement with his colleagues, and no longer possesses a sufficient measure of His Majesty's confidence. He rejoices that a King of Prussia should himself wish to govern. He himself recognizes the disadvantage of his resignation in the public interest, and he has no longing for an idle life; his health is now good, but he feels that he is in His Majesty's way, that His Majesty wishes him to resign, and on this account he has justifiably begged for his discharge from service.

The vice-president of the Cabinet declared that this communication had deeply grieved him, and, assuredly, all

his colleagues. He had until now hoped that differences of opinion existed between His Majesty and the Prime Minister only in the sphere of domestic politics, and that therefore the procedure recently indicated by His Highness, according to which he would confine himself to the direction of foreign affairs, would prove a suitable solution. His Highness's resignation from all his offices would mean interminable difficulties, and even though he found His Highness's displeasure comprehensible, he could only urgently beg that the way to an arrangement might, if anyhow possible, be found.

The Prime Minister remarked that the expedient that he should resign from the service of the Prussian state and confine himself to the position of Imperial Chancellor was made impossible of consideration by the Reichstag and the federated governments. In those quarters it was desired that the Imperial Chancellor should find himself in an official position in which he would cease to lead the Prussian vote, and he could not accept a position in which he would receive instructions from the Prussian Cabinet, in whose creation he had not co-operated. Consequently even this expedient, which he had recently proposed, would not be without its difficulties.

The Minister of Finance explained that the Cabinet order of September 8, 1852, especially in conformity with the statement which the Prime Minister had appended in the accompanying letter, did not in any way exceed what was requisite. This could not present an insuperable difficulty. But even in respect of the difficulties in the sphere of foreign policy, he could only repeat the prayer of the Secretary of State, Herr von Boetticher, that an arrangement might be sought for. For the rest, if His Highness's resignation is not, as was recently alleged, the result of reasons of health, but of political reasons, and if it affects all his offices, the Cabinet will possibly be obliged to consider whether it should not join him in taking this step. Perhaps this would contribute to averting this ominous event.

The Ministers of Public Worship and of Justice remarked that with reference to the points of difference laid before them there existed merely a misunderstanding, which would be explained to His Majesty; and the Minister of War added that in his presence no word had fallen from His Majesty for a long time which referred in any way to warlike developments in respect of Russia.

The Minister of Public Works declared that His Highness's resignation would be a national disaster in respect of the security of the country and the peace of Europe, and they must seek for every means of preventing it. In his opinion in such a case as this the Ministers ought to place their portfolios at His Majesty's disposal, and he at least was determined to do so.

The Minister of Agriculture declared that if the Prime Minister was convinced that his resignation was desired by His Majesty it was not possible to dissuade him from this step. The Cabinet would in any case consider what it would then have to do on its own part.

The Minister of Commerce observed that he personally was not affected by this question, but with reference to the remarks made by the Prime Minister concerning the petition which he had presented he begged to be allowed to explain that this did not apply to new problems of any sort, but to His Majesty's decree of the 4th of February of this year, which he found upon entering into office, and indeed had been confined to the protection of labor legislation in general, which was touched upon in the said decree. Against the imperial order of September 8, 1852, he had nothing to say, and had not mentioned it in His Majesty's presence.

The Prime Minister replied that he was fully persuaded that the Minister of Commerce had been far from desiring to injure him in any way.

The Minister of War observed that the current proposals of the Minister of War were expressly excluded from the stipulations of the order of September 8, 1852, but

without regard to this he had assuredly, when any importan event took place in his department, kept in touch with th Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister replied that he had throughout recog nized the attitude of the Minister of War as his colleague and closed the session.

[Signed] Prince von Bismarck, Von Boetticher, Von May bach, Freiherr Lucius von Ballhausen, Von Gossler, Vo Scholz, Count von Bismarck, Herrfurth, Von Schelling, Vo Verdy, Freiherr von Berlepsch.

[Signed] HOMEYER.

III

AIDE-DE-CAMP VON BISSING TO BISMARCK

(See p. 166)

THE MARBLE PALACE, *June 22, 1888.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY:

I am honored by His Majesty by the charge of most dutifully informing you that His Majesty the Kaiser and King has taken cognizance of divers articles in the Berlin newspapers which have displeased His Majesty excessively. These are, principally, an article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the evening edition of the 20th of this month, and an article in the *Berliner Zeitung* and the *Berliner Presse*, both of the 21st of June, which appear to be written in order to make the world believe that there is a difference of opinion between His Majesty and the Imperial Chancellor in connection with the Quartermaster General Count Waldersee; and these articles, in their views, more or less resemble those which appeared in the freethinking newspapers before the overthrow of the Minister von Puttkamer.

While on the one hand these articles, and in particular that in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, may be aimed at the Imperial Chancellor himself, they are, on the other hand, apparently intended to awaken the belief that there is friction in the authoritative circles of the government in respect of a recent appointment, such as was repeatedly announced during the brief reign of the lately deceased Kaiser.[1]

Since the questions of foreign policy touched upon by these articles are of burning interest to the whole world, the

[1] *Marginal note of Bismarck's:* But did not exist.

foreign newspapers will certainly pay more or less attentic to their contents. His Majesty therefore considers it desi able that Your Excellency, with the assistance of that pa of the press which has close relations with the governmen should put the matter straight and commence an energet opposition to this press attack.

His Majesty has empowered me to assure Your Exce lency that he now, as formerly, occupies the same standpoi as that which he unfolded in his conversation with th Imperial Chancellor in May of this year; that he has nev permitted Count Waldersee, despite his esteem for him, exercise an unjustified influence upon foreign policy; an that under His Majesty's government no court camarill will exist. And he is all the more convinced that amon those persons to whom he has given his confidence, and wh serve him, no parties exist, but that all follow him along th path which leads to the goal recognized by His Majesty a the true one.

Your Excellency's most obediently devoted

FREIHERR VON BISSING,

Lieutenant-Colonel and Aide-de-Camp.

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